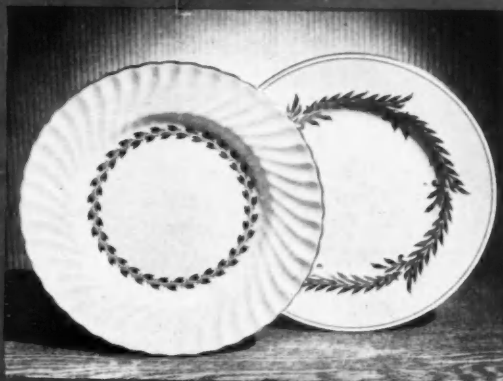




Design



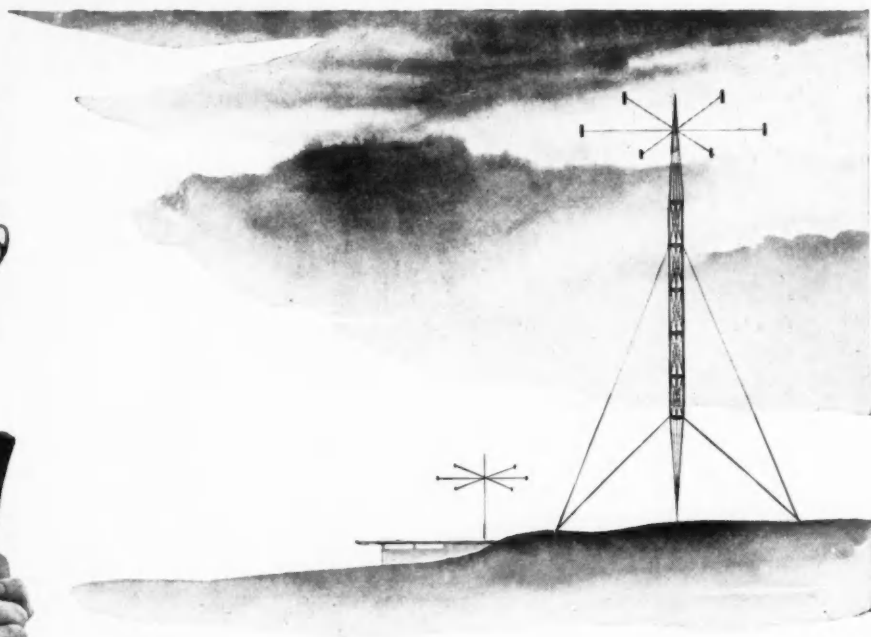
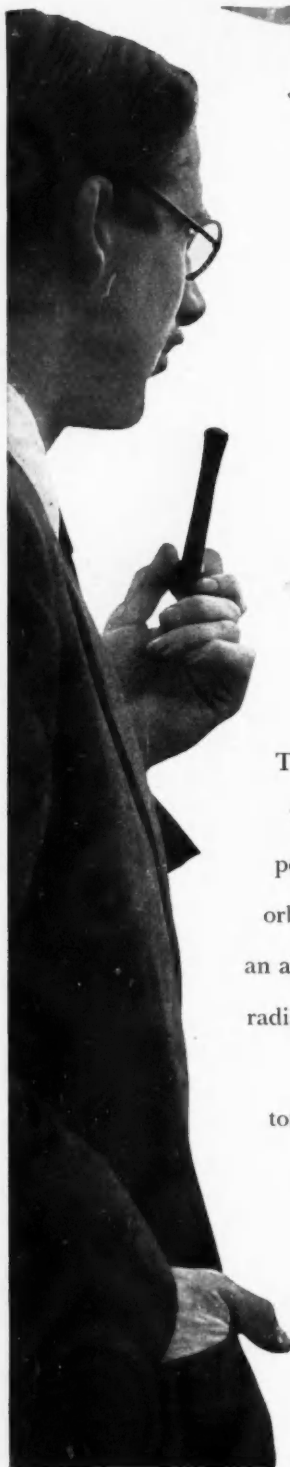
THE MAGAZINE FOR MANUFACTURERS, DESIGNERS AND RETAILERS



DECEMBER 1952 NUMBER 48

The Council of Industrial Design

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS



How much horse power in a raincloud?

There is more energy in a raincloud than in an atomic bomb—and one day we may know how to tap it: there is inexhaustible power in the tides, and people have envisaged a time when we may use so much of it as to alter the orbit of the moon. . . . Perhaps the windmill will stage a comeback, lifted on an aluminium tower to a height of a thousand feet or more. And what of solar radiation? . . . Or will cheap power from atomic fuels outdistance all the rest?

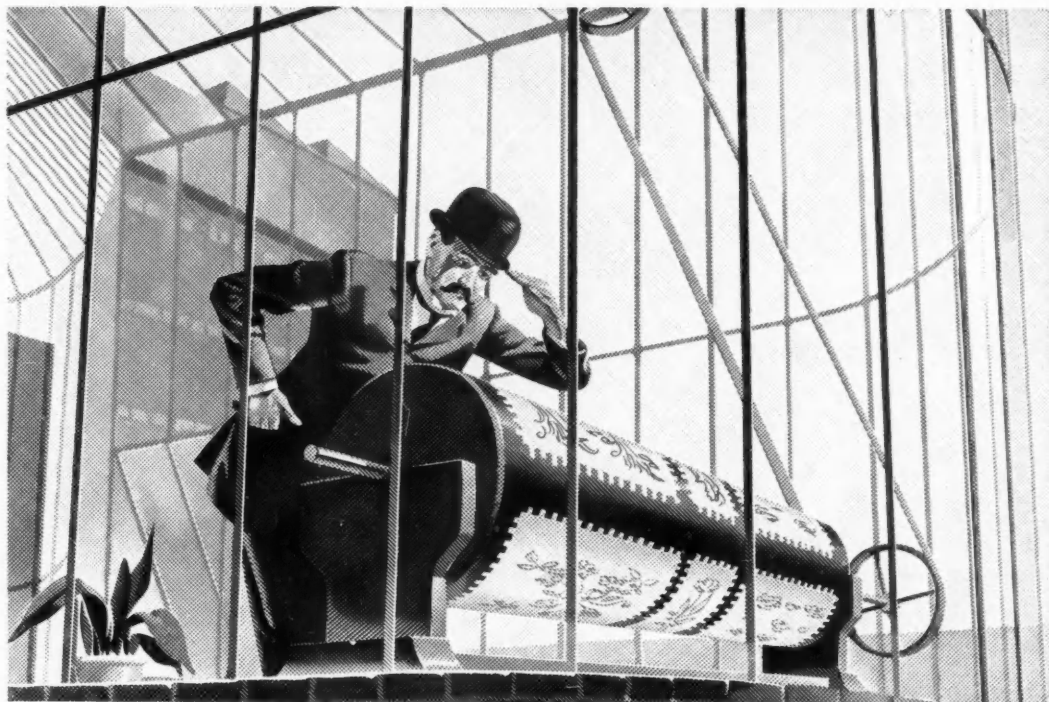
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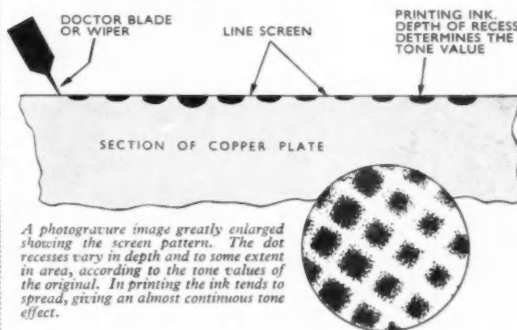
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Scene reconstructed by Roy Carnan

IN LANCASTER, some eighty years ago, young Samuel Fawcett started work as an engraver of copper rollers for printing designs on oilcloth. A keen photographer, he quickly devised a way of saving time and labour. Using the natural sunlight in his conservatory-like exposing room, he prepared the rollers photographically and etched them by an acid process. Later he began to seek a means of reproducing fine gradations of light and shade. In 1890, when he had developed the system of ink control still used today, he met Karl Klic, an inventor from Austria. In collaboration they set out to apply Samuel Fawcett's methods to the printing of paper, and by 1895 they had evolved the photogravure process — now known throughout the world for the fineness and fidelity of its results. In achieving this quality, an important contribution has been made by the development through the years of the specialised gravure papers produced by the Reed Paper Group. For this is an organisation which has inherited from its founder, Albert E. Reed, a vigorous tradition of paper pioneering. As with gravure printings, so too with kraft, newsprint and other papers, the changing needs of trade and times are constantly anticipated. In this way the Reed Paper Group, with its five mills, has acquired technological experience and technical resources unequalled today in the many-sided service it can offer.

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A black and white photograph of a Dolcis shoe store. The store has a modern, minimalist design with a dark ceiling and a light-colored tiled floor. In the background, there are several display cases and a large window. The store is dimly lit, with the main light source coming from the ceiling. The Dolcis logo is visible on the wall in the background.

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In the space that we're allowed —
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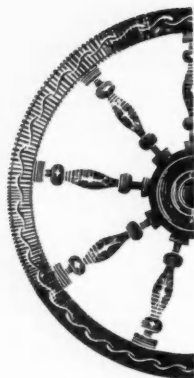
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Design

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FRONT COVER PICTURES

Aston Martin sports car (page 31) Minton china dinner plates (page 13)



Roneo travelling case (page 20)

Rolex man's wrist watch (page 23)

Dateable or Dated

THE EXHIBITION of Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Arts at the Victoria and Albert Museum may have underlined the doubts that are often voiced, especially by retailers, about the lasting qualities of 'contemporary design'. The word 'contemporary' itself has recoiled on its sponsors who now wish they had chosen a less controversial, more easily understood term to describe work that is genuinely creative.

Contemporary has suffered all manner of misconstructions from contemptible to temporary; even its friends are adding to the confusion with further refinements such as pseudo-, repro- and semi-contemporary with the result that the seeker-after-information faced, say, with a Race and an HK chair or with a Heal and a Whitehead fabric, will quite reasonably ask which is the more contemporary. To say that each was contemporary in its day, or to point to Morris and Mackintosh with the same explanation, reduces the argument to decades, years, even months and days, until a stop-watch will be needed to decide the issue.

There is a natural anxiety on the part of stockists and distributors lest 'contemporary' equals 'fashionable' and that unless they can maintain their turnover they will find themselves landed with a dated and unsaleable inventory. In the fashion industries proper this is well understood; a design is nothing if it is not immediately dateable and soon afterwards out of date. In the field of durable consumer goods the problem is not so straightforward. People buy these things for keeps and most people play safe by choosing something that does not instantly proclaim its date of birth. And yet the same people, if they are lucky enough to own an antique, will take great pleasure in dating it. There is some more confusion here, a confusion, we believe, between style and quality, that is quality of design as well as of manufacture.

The V & A exhibition tells an uneven story. Compare the mental energy of the Morris designs with the stale, constipated efforts of the preceding decades or note the vigorous vitality of the Glasgow School and remember its pale commercial imitations. They are all out of date now, yet the original creative work is still acceptable and easily dateable. So it will be with 'contemporary'. We must learn to choose between pieces of real character and those meretricious designs that merely flirt with a fashion.

P.R.

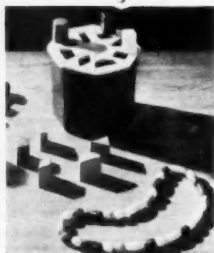
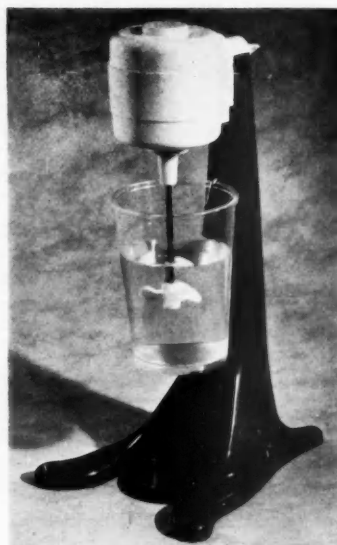
Design in the Stocking

Current trends in Christmas Toys

Are children 'design conscious'? Perhaps this is a silly question, yet in two ways the answer is definitely in the affirmative. Most of the goods in any large toyshop are copies of up-to-date designs in the adult world. Most of them are fit for their purpose. Children may fail to be critical of aesthetic qualities, but as they do insist that toys should resemble real things they see around them, who is to blame if they are led astray? The illustrations on this page show that when toys are selected only from the point of view of design the aesthetic standards reached are not very high.

1: Plastic milk mixer with clockwork motor by Lines Bros Ltd. 2: Wooden engine in seven parts designed by Derek Cook and made by Weekin Baby Toys. 3: Steel pedal-car with two speeds by Lines Bros Ltd. 4: FODEN tipping lorry designed by J. Shackleton and Son and made by Abbey Corinthian Games Co. 5: Plastic 'post

box' and beads designed by Dr D. Lever and made by Dandy Toys Ltd. 6: Miniature clockwork models of JAGUAR XK 120 and ASTON MARTIN D.B.2 by Minimodels Ltd. 7: Part of a dolls' house with interlocking partitions and unit furniture designed by Joy and Eric Parkin and made by the Educational Supply Association Ltd.



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Design FOR JANUARY

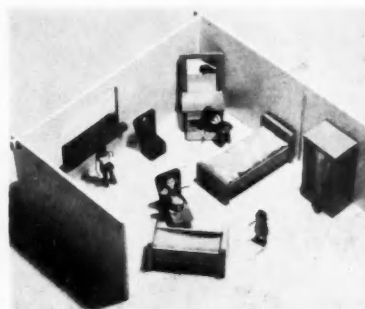
Some features in next month's issue

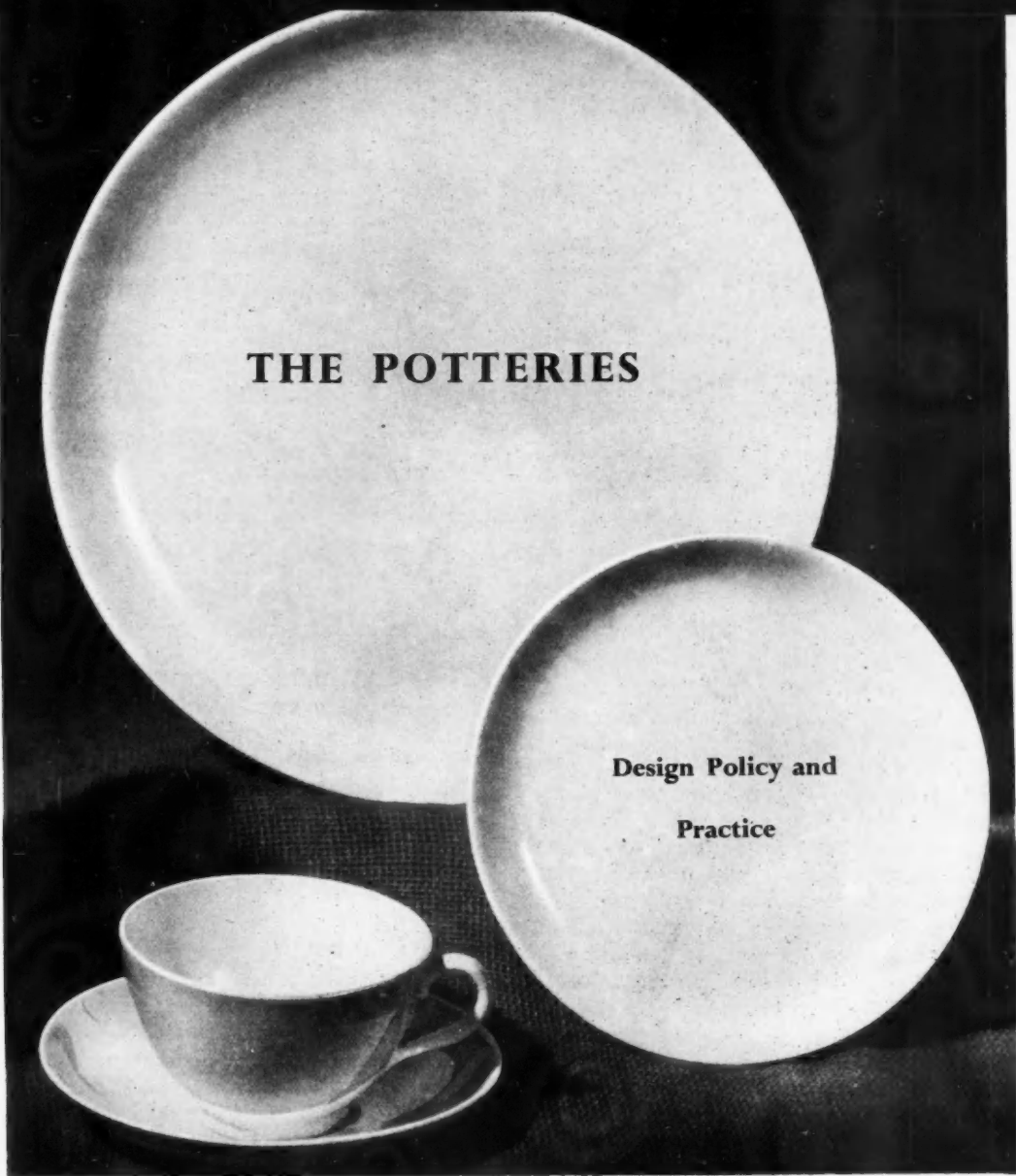
Design Policy in Joseph Lucas Limited

Visual Education in Schools

Experiments with Rubber Upholstery

Review of Current Design





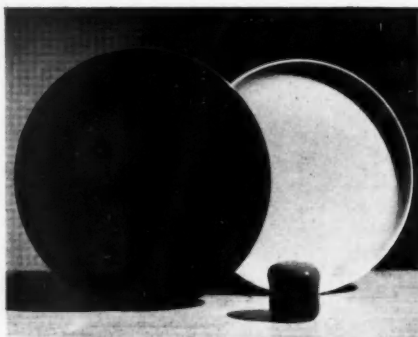
China dinner plate, tea plate, cup and saucer using the coupe shape. Maker: R. H. & S. L. Plant Ltd.

Michael Farr

Recent style changes in the American market are having a marked influence on design trends in the Potteries. In this survey an attempt has been made to appreciate the traditional skills and design talent in the pottery trade, and to suggest the type of contribution they may be expected to make to design standards on the home market. The illustrations which follow indicate these trends as they may soon appear in British shops.



Stoneware plate using the coupe shape. Hand-painted decoration in black on cream glaze. Chinese: Sung Dynasty A.D. 960-1279



HIGHLIGHT dinner plate, left. Distributor: Justin Tharaud & Son. AMERICAN MODERN dinner plate and salt pot, right. Distributor: Richards Morgenthau. Both plates: coupe shape. Designer: Russel Wright.



Earthenware oval coupe shape dinner plate and cereal bowl with lithograph decoration. Designer: Eva Zeisel. Maker: Hallcraft.

THE POTTERIES

Design Policy and Practice

UNTIL AUGUST THIS YEAR any discussion of pottery design was of limited use because no decorated ware was designed specifically for the home market. The Government order prohibiting the decoration of pottery for the home trade was enforced in June 1942. So, for just over ten years, the only pottery permitted in British shops consisted of undecorated pieces in colourless glaze or faulty ware rejected as unsuitable for export. During the year 1951 the total value of pottery sold on the home market was approximately £12m. Out of this £10m. was taken up by white ware and £2m. by decorated 'export rejects'.

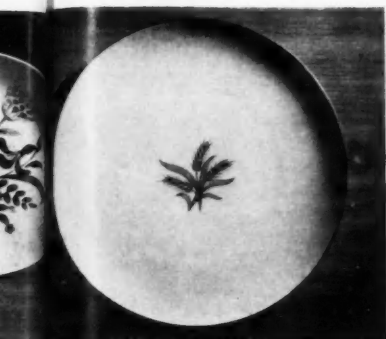
The general release of decorated pottery on August 6, though long-awaited, came as a surprise to both the potters and the public. It came at the end of the summer buying season at a time when everyone in the trade was just beginning the annual fortnight holiday. The demands of the Christmas buying season, due to begin on September 1, therefore became an enigma to manufacturers and buyers who had no time for re-assessing the tastes of the home market. During a recent visit to the Potteries the manufacturers' response to this situation and their present approach to design for the home trade were explained to me.

Altogether I visited 14 firms; 12 of them manufacturing pottery and two supplying lithographs and silk screen transfers to the trade. In an attempt to see a representative cross-section of manufacturing methods

in the Potteries I visited firms in Stoke-on-Trent, Hanley, Burslem (inexpensive, medium and high price earthenware; high price china) and Longton (inexpensive and medium price china). I also had a valuable interview with the Director of the British Pottery Manufacturers' Federation. As far as I can estimate, the one serious gap in my research is that I did not see a sufficient number of the small earthenware firms.

Foreign trade demands

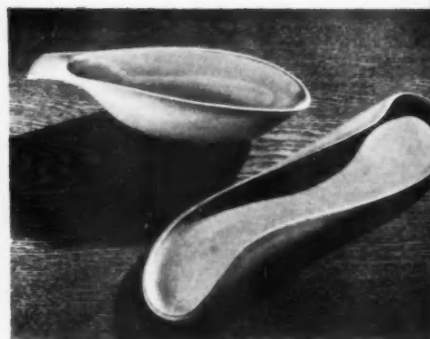
The announcement that decorated pottery could be sold on the home market had little immediate effect upon firms producing high and medium price china and high price earthenware. Manufacturers told me that there was still a delay of a year, in a few cases longer, in satisfying orders from foreign buyers, chiefly for the North and South American markets. Nevertheless they admitted that trading prospects abroad were not as bright as they had been in 1949 and 1950, and each one of them was planning, and beginning to produce, designs specifically intended for the home market. The situation amongst firms producing medium price and inexpensive earthenware and inexpensive china was less happy. While a few of these firms had established themselves securely in the United States market, the bulk of them had relied on a steady demand from the Dominions. For this reason 1952 has been a comparatively difficult year for these firms. Until May there was in Canada a credit restriction on foreign suppliers, in March Australia cut her imports, only to be followed by South Africa and New



China coupe shape dinner plate with transfer decoration in gold. Maker: Lenox Inc.



FRANCISCAN china teaware with coupe shape, available in a variety of solid colour facings. Maker: Gladding, McBean & Co.



AMERICAN MODERN sauceboat and celery dish in grey glaze. Designer: Russel Wright. Maker: The Steubenville Pottery Co.

Zealand where, for the lack of sterling, it became increasingly difficult to sell British goods. As this trade recession was beginning to have a serious effect the opening of the home market has been especially welcomed by these firms.

The effect of ten years' continuous trading in foreign markets has had inevitably a great influence on the types of design now available on the home market, as it will also affect those now being planned. It is axiomatic that every manufacturer likes to cater for a large number of different markets with a limited selection of designs. Wherever possible he will attempt to sell the same design in several markets. But in the Potteries this practice has not been easy and, apart from the few firms with famous names and those others which are able to sell ware of good quality at comparatively low prices, the showrooms in most firms display very many different designs, each one intended for a specific level of taste in a specific market.

In connection with this one generalisation is possible. Manufacturers of medium and low price earthenware and low price china told me that, from their experience of pre-war trade, the taste of the home market is broadly similar to that in the Dominions. Accordingly, when decorated ware was released, many of the designs originally intended for the Dominions were transferred to the home market. And, although it is still too early to give a reliable estimate of sales results, it appears that the judgment of these manufacturers is proving to be correct. The types of design involved, as far as decoration is concerned, are colour-

The photographs on pages 8 and 9 show current American designs



Earthenware salad plate and ashtray using the coupe shape; and a sugar bowl. Designer: Eva Zeisel. Maker: Hallcraft.

ful floral sprays and posies in the old-English Garden manner; in general, apart from the Indian Tree, the patterns are naturalistic but pretty. On the other hand, and especially in china, the naturalistic motifs are small in scale, dainty, faint in colour, more tightly bunched and accompanied by gold borders and maroon grounds. Spring flowers have taken the place of the rich juicy roses so popular in Canada and the United States two years ago.

Although patterns such as these were having a popular reception in British shops, most manufacturers agreed that their success was to some extent due



ABOVE: China dinner plate, cream soup and stand with hand-banded decoration. Designed 1933. China tankard, gilded with groundlaid decoration scratched out with sharp wooden point. Designed 1952. Designer: E. W. Slater. Maker: Shelley Potteries Ltd.



Earthenware dinner plate with hand-painted decoration. Designed late eighteenth century: now in production. Maker: Josiah Wedgwood & Sons Ltd.

RIGHT: China teapot, plate, cup and saucer with groundlay and hand-painted star patterns. Designer: Susie Cooper. Maker: The Susie Cooper Pottery Ltd.

RIGHT, CENTRE: Earthenware dessert set using the coupe shape with hand-painted in-glaze decoration in diffused colours. First produced 1952. Designer: Truda Carter. Maker: Carter, Stabler & Adams Ltd.



to the impulsive reaction of people hitherto restricted to plain white ware. I also found that the first results of these 'Dominion' designs on the home market, revealed a noticeable demand for simpler, quieter patterns. Here again one cannot generalise too freely, for while such patterns on earthenware would probably be cheaper than the former types, on china they might well be more expensive. I shall have to account for this later.

American design influence

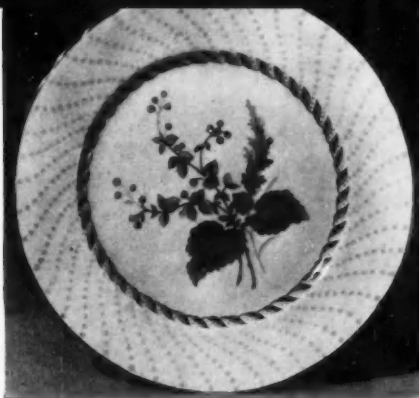
The effect of trading with the United States has produced dissimilar and more interesting results. Here I am concerned mainly with firms producing medium and high price china and high price earthenware. The American market, more than any other, is susceptible to quick changes in taste. In 1950 the majority of firms found that rich rose decorations, often coupled with fluted shapes, together with highly coloured floral sprays enjoyed a strong and steady demand. Now, these decorations, although still produced, have given place to others which are free and open in treatment: in style more informal and more modern.

I say modern because that is the term used in the trade to describe this new style. Its immediate origin can be traced to designs developed by Californian



Earthenware tea plate, bread and butter plate, cup and saucer, using a green body, with 'tube lining': a method of hand-decorating with liquid slip. First produced 1948. Designer: Charlotte Rhead. Maker: Wood & Sons Ltd.

China dinner plate with engraved print and enamel decoration. First produced 1952. Designer: Raymond Ratcliffe. Maker: R. H. & S. L. Plant Ltd.



ABOVE: Earthenware cover-dish (1951 shape), dinner plate (traditional shape), cup and saucer (1952 shapes), with engraved print and enamel decoration. Designer: C. J. Noke. Maker: Doulton & Co Ltd.

LEFT: China cream soup and stand, dinner plate and cover dish with engraved print and enamel decoration. First produced 1951. Designer: H. Holdway. Maker: W. T. Copeland & Sons Ltd.

LEFT, CENTRE: China dinner plate, tea plate, coffee cup and saucer, with engraved print and enamel decoration. Designed for exhibition at the Festival of Britain and now in production. Designer: E. W. Slater. Maker: Shelley Potteries Ltd.

potters, mainly since the war, although elements in the style can be attributed to Swedish and Danish work in the 'thirties. After several years of being rather precious and obscure, the style has made a progressive conquest of markets in the United States from the west to the east coast. A large percentage of American manufacturers has since taken it up because it accords convincingly with the current American practice of 'informal living': a practice which implies that meals, preferably of the buffet type, can be taken in the garden, off the kitchen table or on the living room floor.

New approach to the home market

The assertion that this social phenomenon has been expressed accurately in aesthetic terms is questionable. To account for the new style on this basis would require detailed research in the United States. But, what is more important and, as far as this country is concerned, more readily understood, is the fact that this modern style is far closer to our best contemporary standards in furnishing than anything yet produced in the Potteries. Although designs attributable to this style are now being made in large quantities by manufacturers anxious to retain their hold on the American market, several of them have appeared in British

Earthenware dinner plate, left, with engraved print and enamel decoration. China dinner plate, right, with engraved print decoration in gold. Designed pre-war; now in production. Designer: Eric Ravilious. Maker: Josiah Wedgwood & Sons Ltd.

shops. Again, it is too early to gauge the result of this innovation, so I can only repeat the opinions expressed to me in several firms. One earthenware manufacturer told me that he had noticed in the last six months an increase in "the public's demand for contemporary furniture and furnishings". On the strength of this his designer had produced an entirely new range of shapes and decorations to suit both the American and British markets. Another manufacturer said that in china dinnerware of medium price, a demand had arisen for "simple, tailored patterns in positive colours". While a third, who manufactures inexpensive earthenware in very large quantities, said he was convinced that there had been "no change in home market taste since 1939" and that, if anything, plain pastel coloured and banded ware would be all the 'modern' design required.

The types of ware produced in the Potteries are so diverse in price and design that one cannot generalise about the fate of the modern style. However, one can say that it seems likely that in medium price china and high price earthenware modern designs *will* be available in the shops for the public to make its choice.

In order to know what types and standards of design can be expected from British potteries we should take into account their complex manufacturing techniques, their traditions and their present-day design policies. One manufacturer I met described his colleagues in the Potteries as "rugged individualists". Indeed by far the greater number of firms are family businesses: a description which does not only imply that an owner's grandfather and his own son have been, or still are, engaged in the business, but that many of his work-people can trace their families' connection with the firm through several generations. It follows that in many cases there is not only a strong loyalty surrounding a firm, but a rich assemblage of inherent skills. Girls of 16 can decorate a plate with a skill not mastered by persons twice their age who were not born and brought up within the area of the six towns.

Materials and techniques

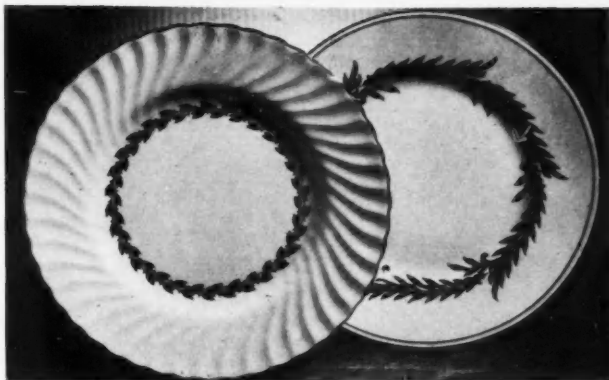
The pottery trade is essentially based on craft techniques; on hand-operated tools rather than machinery. The basic products are of two kinds: bone china and earthenware. Although amongst firms the proportions may differ slightly, bone china contains approximately 25 per cent China clay, 25 per cent Cornish stone and 50 per cent calcined bones. It is termed English bone china to distinguish it from Continental ware, which contains felspar instead of bone. Both types of china become translucent when fired and are sometimes called porcelain. Earthenware consists of 20 per cent China clay and 15 per cent Cornish stone. The rest is ball clay and calcined flint.

Hand-throwing on the wheel of hollow-ware is now very rare in the Potteries. A few firms throw vases, bowls, etc, but the generally accepted method of making hollow-ware articles in earthenware and china is that of casting the shape in a porous mould. The operations which lead up to the actual casting are highly skilled. In the first place the designer's measured drawing is used to make an accurate, full-scale model of the article. In some cases the designer is also the modeller. The Plaster of Paris mould which is made from the model is not used for reproduction, but serves to make the 'case' mould from which several working moulds are formed. These working moulds are then filled with 'slip' (liquid earthenware or china) and allowed to stand for, say, 15 minutes. The porous mould absorbs some of the water from the slip and a coating of clay is deposited on the inside of the mould. When a sufficient thickness of clay has been deposited the remaining slip is poured away. While it is drying the clay formation contracts and can be removed when the mould is opened. The article is then ready for the first (biscuit) firing.

Making plates and cups

Plates and cups, which undoubtedly form the bulk of any firm's output, are produced by hand-operated machines requiring varying degrees of skill. A plate is made by using a plaster mould which corresponds to the interior shape of the plate. A flat disc of clay is slapped on to the mould which is then revolved by a machine called a 'jigger'. The exterior shape and the thickness of the plate are gauged by a horizontal metal profile, which is lowered on to the revolving clay. Cups are made in the reverse way, on the machine called the 'jolley'. The mould forms the outside of the cup and the metal profile the inside. As the jolley revolves the clay is forced into shape between the mould and the profile. Like hollow-ware articles, plates and cups are removed from the mould when dry. Before firing, handles are attached to the cups. Both methods are good examples of mechanised craftwork, and illustrate the essentially traditional nature of contemporary pottery manufacture.

The various methods and temperatures used for firing pottery need not concern us. They are, of course, of vital importance to the designer and to some extent condition his choice of shapes. For instance, when china is fired it becomes almost molten at one stage. The use of thin, horizontal or jagged spouts and handles is therefore unwise, because they would tend to fall out of shape. Earthenware, too, has its own peculiarities which must be taken into account by the designer. It follows that there are certain characteristic shapes for earthenware and china articles, and they can best be appreciated by studying, for example, the range of shapes made by the older firms. The standard techniques of making and firing largely account for the fact that changes of shape occur less frequently than changes of decoration. Cost, too, is an important consideration. I was told that new models and moulds for a complete set of tea, coffee and dinner-ware in bone china would cost at least £1,000 and in some cases up to £5,000. An additional point is that cups, plates, coffee-pots, etc, are so unchangeable



China dinner plates with engraved print decoration in gold. First produced 1950. Designer: John Wadsworth. Maker: Mintons Ltd.



China tea cup and saucer, left, with lithograph decoration; tea cup, saucer and plate, right, with engraved print and enamel decoration. Designed 1952. Designer: John Wadsworth. Maker: Mintons Ltd.

in use that only small variations of shape can be introduced without impairing their practical value. Thus Wedgwood's are still producing a number of their eighteenth century shapes, and some of them are so perfect that it would be unjustifiable to abandon them.

Hand-painting and engraving

Pottery decoration is a different matter. Here the designer has a wide choice of methods for applying decoration to the ware. There are three important types of decoration: hand-painting, printed transfer and lithograph, and they are all applied after the ware has had at least one firing. Free-hand-painting is the traditional method of decorating pottery. It affords a wide variety in the choice of patterns, requires small capital outlay and is suitable for short production runs. Free-hand-painting is a craft which demands artistic skill, experience and patience, and there are now comparatively few persons who are capable of emulating the work which was done, say, 100 years ago. Ever since the introduction of ceramic lithography shortly after 1890, the art of hand-painting has been declining. The recent war accelerated this, and few manufacturers can now afford to keep a large staff of creative artists. The most common motifs are landscapes and roses, and many of the artists are proud enough to sign their own work. A somewhat lesser degree of skill is required for gilding, banding and groundlaying. The patterns used have been predetermined by the designer, so that the craftsman or, more often, craftswoman is only expected to be technically competent.

The printing of transfers onto pottery is probably the oldest method for reproducing an indefinite number of identical designs. The outline of the designer's pattern is first engraved on a flat copper plate. A type of ink consisting of ceramic oxide and boiled linseed oil is rubbed into the engraved pattern which is then covered with tissue paper and pressed between two flannel-faced rollers. This action transfers the pattern to the paper, which is then peeled off the copper plate, applied and rubbed onto the ware by hand. When the paper is washed off, the pattern is left firmly printed on the ware. This printed outline is then filled in by hand-enamelling.

It is usual for the print to be applied to the ware before glazing in the case of earthenware, which means that the enamel colours have to withstand the temperature of the 'glost' or second firing of over 1000°C. This limits the number of colours which can be used effectively. In china the enamels are applied on top of the glaze and afterwards fired at a temperature comparatively low (600–800°C.).

Lithography

Before the war leading manufacturers looked down upon lithography. At that time it was thought that lithography was little more than a cheap substitute for hand-painting, and the general design standard was deplorable. Nowadays, the shortage of skilled labour rather than price is the dominating factor. With foreign markets which insist first on quality (richness of colour) manufacturers have been encouraged to spend more money on lithograph design, with the result that it is at last becoming established as a decorative medium which can exist in its own right. Because of the extensive and complicated machinery required, lithographic transfers are prepared by specialist firms. Each firm maintains a full-time designer, but for original work many pottery manufacturers prefer to rely on their own design staff. The following is a brief outline of the process involved. The designer's pattern is first copied on to tracing paper, which acts as a key. As a separate lithographic stone, or zinc plate, is required for each colour, the different coloured sections of the pattern must be isolated, and then transferred to the stones or plates. It is usual for this to be done by hand, and great skill is needed to ensure that the designer's pattern is accurately rendered.

As an alternative method photo-lithography may be used. For the general printing trade photo-lithography has been in current use for more than 40 years, but it was not successfully applied to ceramic transfer work until 1944. Even now there are only very few firms in the Potteries using the method. Its chief advantage lies in the fact that the designer's pattern is not re-drawn by hand, but photographed, which implies mechanical accuracy. The colours in the pattern are separated



Earthenware dinner plate, cup and saucer, using coupe shape. Lithograph decoration. First produced 1948. Designer: E. Sambrook, Jnr. Maker: Wood & Sons Ltd.



China dinner plate, cream soup and stand, cup and saucer with lithograph decoration. First produced 1952. Designer: Susie Cooper. Maker: The Susie Cooper Pottery Ltd.



China dinner plate, gilded rim, with lithograph decoration. Designer: Victor Skellern. Maker: Josiah Wedgwood & Sons Ltd.

individually by colour filters in the camera: a process which is still very much in the experimental stage. Each colour produces a different negative. The negatives are then printed down on to zinc plates, which now correspond to the lithographic stones already described. The image on each stone, or zinc plate, is printed in varnish on to a specially prepared transfer paper. After each printing operation the requisite colour is dusted onto the varnish. Both processes are repeated for each colour, until the complete pattern is built up. It can be then transferred to the ware in one operation.

Lithography is a costly process and can only be justified when a sufficiently large number of lithographs in one pattern is required. Lithographs are sold in editions of 2,000, 3,000 or 5,000 sheets and unless a manufacturer buys the whole edition he is not safe from competitors. As each sheet contains 20 or more transfers it does not pay to use lithographs if less than 50,000 to 100,000 pieces of ware in one design are going to be produced. The initial expense is considerable and a manufacturer must be sure that the lithograph is exactly what he requires. In some cases the pattern is re-proofed five or six times before the manufacturer is satisfied. In addition, there is frequently a delay of one year between the time a lithograph edition is ordered and finally delivered. The cost of a lithograph rises in proportion to the number of colours used. This is because each colour requires a separate stone, which in turn necessitates a complete operation for printing and colouring. For earthenware the average number of colours now used is between six and eight; for china between 12 and 15. As an example of the expense entailed, an edition of 5,000 sheets of an eight colour floral spray would cost between £800 and £1,000.

Before going on to consider methods of design in the trade, one further type of decoration and one technical

point should be mentioned. The silk-screen transfer method was first intended for glass decoration but since the war it has been successfully applied to pottery. The colours in the designer's pattern are first separated, and then individually printed through silk-screens onto a transparent collodion film. The pattern is built up as each enamel colour is printed on the film. When transferred to the ware the enamels stand out in varied relief which, to the uninitiated, suggests that the ware has been painted by hand.

Standards of quality vary, but there is in most firms a fairly high percentage of rejected pieces at some stage in the production process. Flaws may be noticed at an early stage of manufacture or they may only be discovered after the ware has had several firings. The fact that a perfect body with an even glaze is not easy to produce, especially in china, partly explains why it is often economical to apply a decorative pattern extensive enough to cover unsightly flaws in the ware. Because of this some sparse patterns, often in the modern style, are not popular in the trade.

Designers in the trade

Except for one case, all the firms I visited employ one or more staff designers. In each case the head designer, or art director as he is sometimes called, has had an art school training, either at the Burslem School of Art or the Royal College of Art. In some firms the assistant designers also have had a similar training. However, this state of affairs is not representative of the whole trade, for in many small firms the person in charge of the decorating shops is also responsible for new designs. He is seldom expected to produce

original work and he either relies upon the designer of lithographs employed by the printer or modifies his firm's own existing patterns himself.

Free-lance designers have never been widely used by pottery manufacturers. This is chiefly because many of the techniques of making and decorating are complicated, and can only be understood by someone with personal experience. A free-lance would have to gain this experience by working in a pottery; in other words he would, for a short period, become a staff designer. Quite apart from this, the manufacturers I met are satisfied with their own staff and see no reason for employing outside designers as well.

On account of the recent change of emphasis in the American market from traditional patterns to those which are modern, designers now enjoy greater scope for creative experiment. This was clearly demonstrated on my recent visit, for in each designer's studio I saw a large number of trial patterns: in two cases I saw the first models of some entirely new shapes.

Design trends

As we have seen, the cost of producing a new shape for a complete range of pieces is very high. With this in mind the importance of maintaining a hold on the American market can be indicated by the fact that out of the 14 firms I visited ten have started to manufacture the 'coupe' shape. This shape, as far as plates are concerned, is rimless, and therefore unconventional in this country. While it is not new in pottery, it was only rarely seen in the Potteries until the recent demands of the American market had been felt. As with other designs originally intended for export, the coupe shape will be seen on the home market, if only in small quantities. Many manufacturers think that it will not be popular because, in dinner plates, it provides no place for the mustard. However, one can only hope that this will be a trivial objection, for the coupe shape offers the designer a much greater freedom for decorative treatment. For technical reasons, it is easier to lay a transfer or lithograph on a coupe shape than on one which has the usual pronounced rim.

Altogether, the outlook for pottery design for the home market is promising. Not only are the Potteries still rich in traditional skills and a surprisingly wide variety of decorative techniques, but manufacturers appear to have a new attitude towards design. This cannot be described as a deliberate policy, except in a few leading firms, but rather as a practical acknowledgment of current design trends in other fields. The illustrations in this article show what should be only the beginning of a new phase in pottery design.

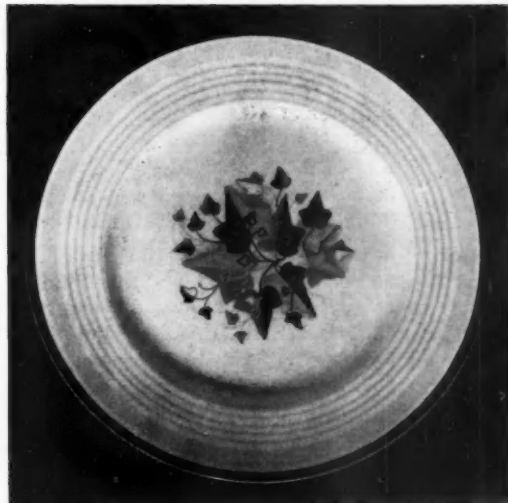


China dinner plate, tea cup and saucer, with experimental decoration (hand-painted) for possible reproduction by photolithography. Designed 1952. Designer: E. W. Slater. Maker: Shelley Potteries Ltd.

Earthenware dinner plate, china tea cup and saucer with groundlay border and lithograph decoration. Designer: Susie Cooper. Maker: The Susie Cooper Pottery Ltd.



Earthenware dinner plate. Maker: Alfred Meakin Ltd. Silk-screen decoration, 1952. Designer: A. Sayer Smith. Maker: Johnson Matthey & Co Ltd for Alfred Meakin Ltd. It is hoped that this design will soon be on the market.



THIS OTHER EDEN



Designers' Paradise

A. B. R. Fairclough

I SOMETIMES WONDER what it would be like to live in a world entirely approved of by the Council of Industrial Design, the Arts Council and THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

Such a state of affairs postulates a complete educational revolution and boundless capital for replanning and rebuilding town and country. But it may not be entirely unprofitable to consider such a fantasy for a few minutes as if it had in fact come about. What would be the effect of such all-pervading 'good design'?

A great number of people view with strong distaste any suggestion of uniformity in their domestic surroundings. This is probably an unfortunate memory of the austere days of 'utility' during and shortly after

the war, when circumstances limited furniture production to very few, rather severe designs. The state of affairs is now quite different: not only are there many different timbers available, but there is a most encouraging spread of the new idiom through the furniture trade. Naturally there is still a very long way to go, and there are many unfortunate essays in the contemporary idiom, but the *variety* now available to the intelligent purchaser is encouraging. Amongst textiles also there is a much greater choice and the many gay and colourful designs becoming available render it

unnecessary for a home to be dull, or exactly like the one next door.

So let us assume that all the varied flowers in our national garden are of faultless strain; not a weed, or blemish or blight in sight. Suppose we go on a bus ride through London or any other large town. We would traverse street after street of buildings conceived in harmony, elegant in proportion and lively in colour, unsullied by urban grime and smoke; all lettering would be a work of art, all the vehicles we passed as fine as the farm waggon or the phaeton, the street lighting graceful and efficient. Even the displays in the shops would all be the work of masters in their art working with material of impeccable quality.

When we reach the outskirts of our city there would be no untidy fringe, but a clearly marked green belt of unspoilt landscape, pasture, arable and woodland, with all necessary buildings carefully sited, constructed and coloured so that they melted into or contrasted with the countryside in the most sensitive way.

The fate of the élite

We have assumed an educational revolution; the circulation of this journal would be comparable to that of THE NEWS OF THE WORLD. What then would be the position of that élite referred to by E. M. Forster as the "aristocracy of the intelligence", who, one hopes, would survive in any age to leaven the taste of the masses. What would there be for the sophisticated eye to light upon in such a plethora of good taste? Where would be those pearls upon a dung heap that now inspire articles in the more 'advanced' magazines?

Our "aristocrats" who now perch rather self-consciously on contrivances of metal, string and hide would probably by then be supported by some invisible apparatus of their own creation. Of course, it is rather easy to mock, and without an *avant-garde* to pioneer the way ahead our new world would indeed be dull. Its uninhibited experiments throw up a number of ideas, many of them sterile, but also some which point the way for industry. Without the brave experimenters our commercial activities would surely suffer.

One hopes that in our new Utopia, when every manufacturer employed full-time designers – as many as the design schools could train – a new race of designer-supermen would emerge, and that we should still find things that were head and shoulders above the common level of excellence. But however excellent the design there is a certain sameness in feeling about all objects of a kind produced in the conditions of our modern economy. These conditions are now becoming more and more stereotyped and they invade an

increasing number of spheres of human activity. If we are to preserve individuality we must allow for and encourage the influence of our strong and ancient national traditions. This implies something a little more adult than merely reproducing *ad nauseam* the outlines of furniture and buildings and light fittings of the eighteenth century. It means adopting their creators' attitude of mind, their sense of proportion, their respect for quality and their eagerness to experiment.

Preserving the past

What our wonderful heritage has left us we should preserve with care and incorporate it wherever possible in our new plans. This means an extremely difficult task for the town planner; so many things worth keeping are in such inconvenient positions – small terraces in busy commercial areas, large empty mansions in remote parts of the country. In the replanning of a town or a district such features may well provide the key to the whole, and old buildings may be the kernel from which the whole unit has visibly grown; the church, the mansion, the grouping round the green. One of the features of the Abercrombie County of London plan was its insistence on retaining the identity and community feeling of the old villages absorbed some centuries ago by the metropolis.

Within doors we should need to add something other than the range offered to us by industry, however excellent that might be. If we were fortunate enough we should be able to introduce into our rooms at least



"... the variety now available to the intelligent purchaser is encouraging. . . ."



Our "aristocrats" perching on contrivances.

one piece of what Osbert Lancaster called "nice complicated furniture" from a previous age; something which was made with that superlative individual skill and sensitiveness which is so very seldom obtainable today. Or again this variant might be in the form of a mirror or pottery or glass or an oriental rug.

Plastics, sheet metal and glass, painted and anodised rods are excellent new materials which we are just beginning to use intelligently. But they are not substitutes for wood or ivory or alabaster, which with the passage of time and much handling take on the most wonderful patina. To retain their charm the modern materials must always be bright and fresh: they must either be repainted or replaced. The difference between the new materials and the old is similar to that between a Cotswold manor house which slowly becomes lichen and mellowed, and a Regency terrace which needs frequent repainting and relies on proportion more than patina for its appeal to the senses. Lewis Mumford has written that our future homes and towns will be expendable. He envisages such rapid technological advances that whatever we build will be quite outdated within less than 50 years. No architect should therefore build for eternity any more – at least in the domestic sphere. This means changing a house as one does a car; both will be factory products. It will help us to adjust ourselves to such a revolutionary state of affairs if we keep those carefully chosen examples from our past with us to act as variants on the modern theme. With them could well go an occasional piece of fine modern hand-work:

pottery, furniture, weaving, sculpture, which would be very different from a factory product.

One more thing would be an enormous help to our lives and culture. We can appreciate workmanship so much more readily if we have wrestled with the material ourselves. While it needs a small fortune to buy an exquisite cabinet made by a leading hand-craftsman, those who can acquire the skill could devote a most uneconomic number of man-hours to making such a thing for themselves, and enjoy it for the rest of their lives. Nothing worth while of that kind is ever done quickly; but if we improve our industrial techniques and shorten our working hours we shall have an even greater number of leisure hours to fill. After all, the way we use our leisure at the moment is not on the whole very profitable.

A thing which has done much to enliven our surroundings in the past is the salty tang of popular art. It has all but disappeared, except for the occasional canal barge or painted coster's cart, and no Arts Council competition could revive it. Perhaps we can only treasure what remains, in museums and in our own homes, and hope that natural ingenuity and inventiveness may somehow survive the mass 'education' of the Press and radio. The Women's Institutes and the Rural Industries Bureau have done much to encourage local craftsmanship, but it is very doubtful if they will ever recreate its spontaneity.



"... nice complicated furniture. ..."

LETTERS

The choice between designers

From a consultant designer

SIR: Your leading article in the November issue of *DESIGN* on the choice between designers, staff or consultant, prompts me to ask why there should have to be a choice.

In our organisation we have always considered ourselves as aiding and stimulating the resident design staffs - not displacing them in any way.

Unfortunately early writers and much current propaganda have completely confused the question of what a consultant designer is and does. He is an expert in appearance as it affects sales. He is not necessarily an expert engineer, but he should know enough about manufacturing technique to be certain that his ideas are practical. To expect him to provide a full set of production drawings and revolutionise manufacturing methods is to misunderstand his function and to misuse him. If he is widely experienced he can often suggest alternative ways of manufacturing which are used in other industries.

He is employed primarily to boost sales by design and his advantage over the staff designer is that he has inside knowledge of current trends in many other fields to help him, and he is not inhibited by internal politics.

In your article you imply that staff designers are still looked on as junior members of the production staff and I agree that they should generally be given better status than they are. In turn, however, they should give a sympathetic hearing to the sales staff so that they not only design well for manufacture but also design for sales.

Ultimately, when aesthetic appreciation is accepted as a normal part of education, I envisage the design department to be directed by two men, one an expert in appearance and the other an expert on technique, each appreciating the other's point of view and collaborating to produce articles which look well, are made well and which sell well.

But there will still be the need for the consultant to inject those fresh ideas from time to time.

DOUGLAS SCOTT
Scott-Ashford Associates Ltd
100 Gloucester Place
London W1

From a staff designer

SIR: Much can be said either for or against using an outside design consultant.

While acknowledging the various benefits which a visiting specialist can contribute to the design team I still believe that, in the long run, the best policy is to improve the quality of that team from within. Conditions vary so greatly in different industries and with firms of different sizes that it is unwise to generalise. But surely it is a confession of weakness and a short-sighted policy to have to bring in outside help on such vital matters as product design.

The standard of staff designers should be raised by the better training now available and their status recognised by a reasonably authoritative post. Even more desirable, though more difficult to accomplish, is that all members of the planning and production team should become better acquainted with the fundamentals of good industrial design.

Until such times arrive, and they could if industry made the effort to widen the scope of its technological training, the fully qualified consultant has a valuable part to play.

R. M. KAY
61 Wellington Road
Fallowfield
Manchester 14

From a technical director

SIR: In the gas appliance industry, every firm, I think without exception, maintains its own design office. Outside designers have been brought in on a number of occasions, and with considerable success. At first sight there would appear to be a good case in our industry for the employment of outside consultants. The technical functions of the appliances are fairly easily grasped, the methods of construction and the choice of materials and finishes belong to common practice, and the designs are not changed very frequently. Given the co-operation of the inside staff, a really brilliant consultant should be capable of producing a 'best-seller'.

Against this, the case for the inside staff is supported by a number of factors, none of which by itself can usually be decisive. If the firm's own designers have a record of success, the question of outside help never arises. Even if they have not been very successful, they may not have produced a failure, and the directors may feel that the risk of a failure is greater in an outside design than in their own. In the whole field of domestic appliances consumer opinion moves very cautiously. A design that is two years ahead of its time may find no sale at all, except by the pressure of advertisement. On the other hand, if one produces exactly what the public wants, one may have to bring out a new model every two years. What is needed is a design that is slightly in advance, which will both stimulate and fix public opinion, and with good fortune may hold the market for five years or more.

Where a design office already exists, the decision to bring in a consultant always implies some lack of confidence in the home team, and this may weaken their own confidence in themselves. They may even fail to profit by the experience, and may afterwards imitate the great man's mannerisms without any understanding of his ideas.

On the other hand, a design team recruited from men with the right artistic and technical training, encouraged to improve their qualifications and given frequent opportunities of meeting their customers and of seeing their competitors' products,

will produce successful designs, even though there may not be a genius amongst them. The real strength of a design team is in the gradual creation of a tradition, which will not only give a recognisable character to all their products, but will be the surest safeguard against mistakes. These long term advantages outweigh the more immediate merits of an outside consultant.

W. E. BENTON
Technical Director
Sidney Flavel & Co Ltd
Leamington Spa

From overseas

SIR: I should like to refer to the very important question whether the consultant or the staff designer is best suited to industry (*DESIGN* November 1952 page 5). It seems to me that there is no general reply to this question, but each individual firm has to decide whether it should employ its own staff designer or engage a consultant designer from time to time.

In our case, being a department store with our own production of furniture and certain other kinds of home furnishing material, and running at the same time a rather big contract department supplying public rooms with all kinds of furnishing, we are in a very strong need of keeping a rather big group of staff designers employed. Thus we have staff designers for furniture, light fittings, furnishing fabrics, carpets, etc., and they perform a very inspiring work in developing from time to time new items to be produced either in our own factories or by independent manufacturers with whom we co-operate.

We have found it an essential part of our policy to create our own merchandise within these fields and, therefore, we have also formed rather well equipped studios and designing offices for this purpose. We feel we are very much dependent on the skill of this staff and we appreciate very much the work of these different individuals. In these studios we do quite a lot of experimental work, and we are very anxious that not only the leading people in the designing groups but also other members of the staff get their chance to travel and to keep in touch with the development that is going on in their lines in different parts of Europe.

From time to time, however, we also avail ourselves of the experience of consultant designers. For instance in the textile line we have employed outside people to create new patterns and form new ideas, particularly for printed material. We have also called upon free-lance designers for furniture and other products when we have found that such a help could be useful and advisable. Though this might mean a certain competition for our own employees, we feel the importance of having such a co-operation with free-lance people, as they may have an inspiring influence upon our own groups and supply them with fresh viewpoints and ideas. These cases, however, are always exceptions and by far the most important work is always performed by the staff designers.

R. KALDEREN
Vice-managing director
Nordiska Kompaniet
Stockholm, Sweden

Further letters on this subject will appear next month.

REVIEW of CURRENT DESIGN

This feature offers a selection of goods up to the standard acceptable for 'Design Review', the photographic index of current British products that is open for inspection at the London headquarters of the CoID.

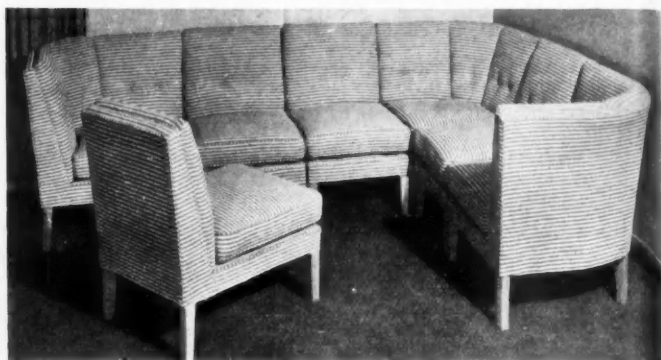
Manufacturers in a wide range of durable consumer goods are invited to submit their new products for inclusion in 'Design Review'. All enquiries should be addressed to Mark Hartland Thomas, Chief Industrial Officer, Council of Industrial Design.



ABOVE: A travelling-case of brown morocco cowhide for showing photographs, with metal holders and mounting cards and transparent shields. These can be fitted on both sides, instead of the wallet, and the handles are also optional. Maker: Roneo Limited.



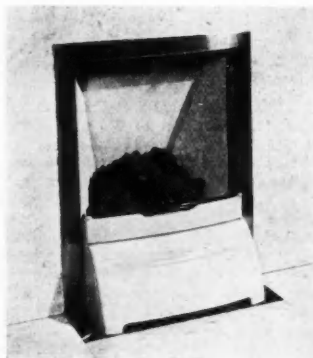
ABOVE: Typewriter case in English coach hide & white linen thread. Designer: John Waterer. Maker: S. Clarke and Co Ltd.



ABOVE: The unit principle, which was introduced long ago for bookcases, can when applied to sofas and chairs provide comfortable seats for many people in a small space. The units are easy to

move and regroup for different occasions and their sharply cut off profile has a smart appearance. Designers: Ronald Long and Ronald Avery. Maker: R. S. Stevens Ltd.

BELOW: All-night solid-fuel grate. It is rare for one of the modern economical fireplaces to have such a modest appearance. Maker: Radiation Ltd.

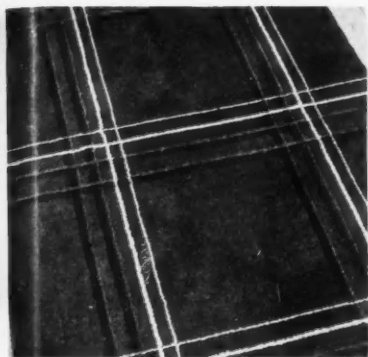


BELOW: Three-way control pressure cooker, conforming to British Standard 1746 for safety, as do all pressure cookers in 'Design Review'. Maker: Platers and Stampers Ltd.

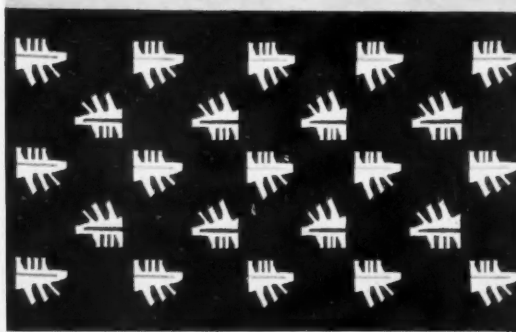


ABOVE: Units can be achieved of material and Co

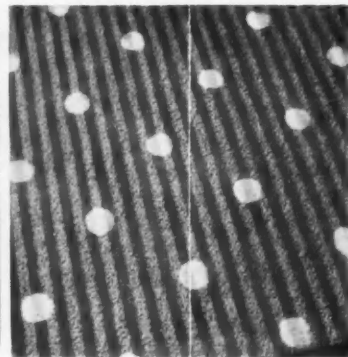
BELOW: often the finger-t... Here th... headroo



ABOVE: The tartan theme makes a handsome pattern that gives strongly marked scale to a large expanse of carpet for places of public assembly. Maker: James Templeton and Co Ltd.



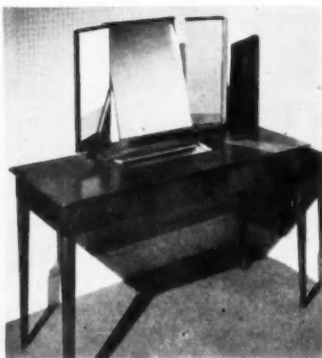
ABOVE: Wool carpet which can be woven in sizes and colours to choice: this one measures 7 feet by 4 feet. The decorative motif has a shaggy look which suits the material and is chosen to look well either way up. Designer: Mrs K. Henneberg. Maker: S. J. Rybczyk.



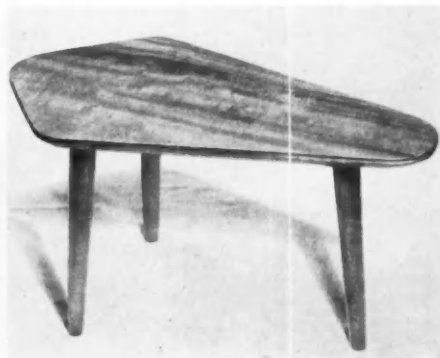
ABOVE: Contrasting colours and textures make a pattern that emphasises the carpet character more than do some conventional pictorial effects. Designer: J. A. Charles. Maker: James Templeton and Co Ltd.



ABOVE: The legs of this sideboard are removable so that units can be placed on top of each other. Elegance has been achieved mainly by careful proportions and economy of material. Designer: Robin Day. Maker: S. Hille and Co Ltd.

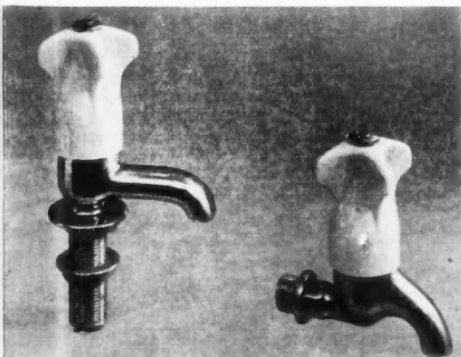


ABOVE: The mirror has been brought into harmony with the dressing-table - a problem that has baffled many. Designer: W. H. Russell. Maker: Gordon Russell Ltd.

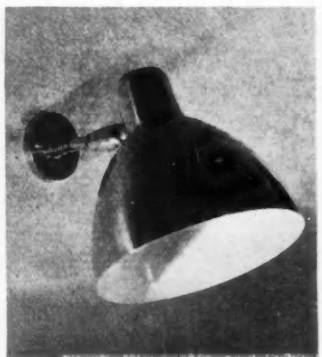


ABOVE: This sturdy occasional table has a fashionable shape, but one that is justified by convenience for placing against an easy chair at one's elbow, with things on it readily to hand. Designer: Herbert Berry. Maker: Herbert Berry Associates.

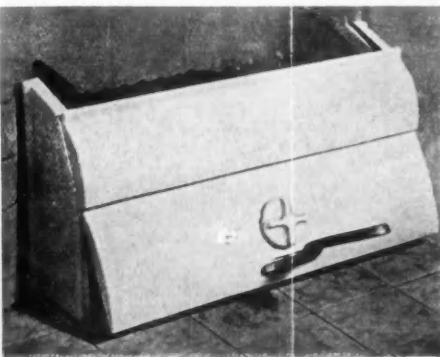
BELOW: Taps rightly show gradual development more often than innovation. Recently many have adopted the finger-tip grip to avoid excessive wear on the washer. Here the white plastic caps lift off for easy access to the headwork. Maker: Sanbra Ltd.



BELOW: This wall-bracket light reveals careful study of the relationship between the simple and complex curvatures of its parts, especially in working parts behind the shade. Maker: Best and Lloyd Ltd.



BELOW: The bulky appearance of the high insulated front, necessary for fuel economy, has been cleverly reduced by extending the horizontal front panels to the full width available. Designers: H. Allender and J. J. Allender, Jr. Maker: Rainwater Castings Ltd



WRIST WATCHES

Clare Fry

The increasing speed of air transport and the need to avoid human error by providing more complicated mechanisms with clear, precise operation, have created fresh design problems for watch manufacturers. As this article shows, Switzerland retains her leadership in world markets by means of fresh technical developments although she appears to lack an active awareness of the best design trends in other countries.

1: These new Swiss ETERNA-MATIC models for women are the first watches with winders mounted on tiny ball-bearings. They show the deep bezel required to minimise the size of the self-winding watch.

THE WRIST WATCH is a unique mechanism from the industrial designer's point of view in that it is the only more or less precision instrument that has become a universal necessity, and yet a personal ornament. In becoming an ornament it seems to be almost an anachronism in this scientific and technical age. Few of the recent instruments that have been added to our homes, for instance, show any likelihood of developing their ornamental aspects to the degree that the watch and clock have done. Their clinical severity, relying almost entirely on proportion to give visual pleasure, is part of the prevailing taste of the day and appeals to a generation which is captivated by the appearance of jet bombers.

Fortunately the watch, while maintaining the highest standards of functional design, has a long tradition of the jewellers' art behind it, and offers a classic instance of the marriage of science and art. Should another 50 years see a state of affairs in which science has advanced to the point where it is normal for a man to carry about with him half a dozen or so scientific instruments strapped to various parts of his anatomy, let us hope their makers will go to the watch and consider its ways.

The important design story in watches today is in the development of the automatic (self-winding) watch and the adaptations of case-shape necessitated by the new mechanisms. At present the new form is only fully developed with the men's models for it is a much more difficult problem to incorporate the bulky mechanism in a woman's small watch. It follows that one task for the designer is to give the watch the appearance of being smaller than it is in fact the case. The normal method of making the watch appear smaller is to have the bezel sloping in, sometimes to a marked extent, so that the dial is considerably smaller than the case itself, 1. The watch, however, still remains quite thick, and bears some resemblance to earlier spheroid shapes. In most of the self-winding watches the crown has been retained since it, or something similar, is required to set the hands when the watch needs adjusting. But in the latest type from Jaeger-le-Coultre the crown has been removed, with marked improvement to the general appearance of the watch-case. A wheel for adjusting the hands has been incorporated in a recessed back, 2 and 3, and it can be easily moved with the thumb-nail. This JAEGER watch incorporates most of the features of present-day Swiss design, including the dagger hands and the appliqué-ciphers to mark the hours. Another feature of the automatic watch, an indicator to mark the power-reserve worked up by wrist movement, has brought an addition to the dial in the form of a circular indicator similar to that of the



2 and 3: The face and back of the latest type of JAEGER self-winding watch. Adjustment to the hands is made by moving the wheel on the back, which makes the usual crown unnecessary. This photograph makes the dagger hands look heavier than they are.



seconds' hand. Other automatic watches have placed this indicator on the back of the case, as the inclusion of it on the dial face without careful designing may lead to confusion. An interesting development in the Swiss industry is that in the ciphers used to mark the hours the luminous paint is recessed to avoid an ugly appearance in daylight. The appliqué-ciphers may be raised as much as 1/16 inch.

Design details on dials

As public interest is once again being shown in calendar watches, the designer is set many problems in the preparation of clear and pleasing watch faces.

A number of dials have been evolved, incorporating phases of the moon, day of the week and day of the month. Latterly, however, the trend is to show only the day of the month in figures, as in the OMEGA watch, 4, where the figures marking the day of the month are the only arabic numerals. In the ROLEX watch, 5, the figure is near the crown and thus avoids confusion with the position usually reserved for either the seconds' indicator or some form of wording – in the case of the ROLEX, "Officially certified chronometer". The lettering is pleasantly done, but is it necessary to place this information on the dial?

The universal time watch sets similar problems to the calendar watch. Such a form of watch is becoming increasingly important now that communications have



4: The designer of this OMEGA self-winding watch has elaborated the ciphers until they resemble Turkish numerals. The slot for the calendar is gold-edged and the dial layout looks flashy and modernistic.



5: This ROLEX self-winding watch also has a slot for the day of the month. Luminous paint is recessed in the ciphers and hands. The dial layout is precise but harsh.

been speeded up to the point where a man may speak on the 'phone to another in a different time zone or may fly by jet aircraft from one to another and back again within a few hours. The dial needed for such a watch presents an interesting visual problem which, at the present time, has not been solved satisfactorily since a large amount of lettering and figures must be placed in a limited space with maximum clarity. A comparison between the *HELVETIA* Univertime solution, 6, and the *TISSOT* Navigator, 7, gives some idea of the variation that is possible.

Characteristics of the Swiss industry

These are a few of the problems that are being considered in the Swiss watch industry today. The Swiss industry is perhaps 10 years ahead of the English since it dominates the world market and has to set the pace if it is to maintain the large turnover needed by a mass-producing industry. Where the English industry has perhaps four firms manufacturing movements the Swiss has 60 carrying production through all its stages. It is customary for the production to be broken up into many subsidiary industries. Firms will concentrate on hands, dials or cases. This is also the pattern of the industry in this country, but with the larger Swiss production it is possible for very many more designs of each component to be evolved and for more frequent changes to be effected. Longer runs reduce the individual cost, and adaptation to new design ideas is much more speedy, whether

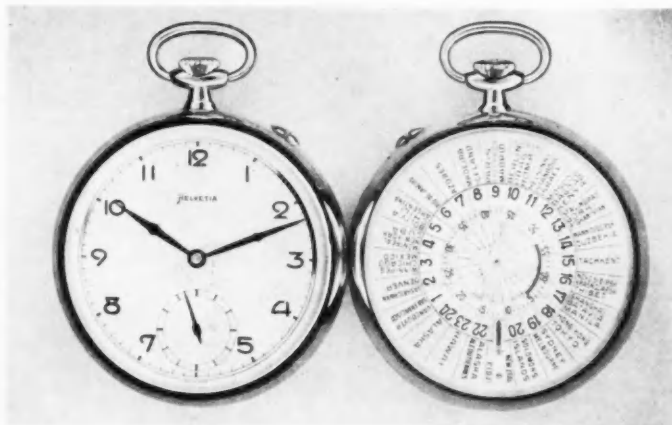
they are in the field of technical innovation, as with the automatic watch, or of style changes.

But although Switzerland dominates the world market it must not be concluded that there is a dominance of Swiss design to the exclusion of influences from abroad. With a turnover of such immensity it is important for the Swiss to keep in touch with cultural changes in their markets, and one of their most highly developed branches is market research. Constant contact with the Paris fashion houses makes the Swiss manufacturer aware of changes in styles, both cosmopolitan and national. The Swiss produce a specifically English-style watch for sale in this country, the Dominions and parts of the United States. Nevertheless, it seems that the Swiss manufacturer's interest in foreign design trends has been uncritical. Far too many styling tricks are used to make complex mechanisms appear unnaturally simple. It is clear that at the present time designers have not found adequate solutions to the aesthetic problems created by new technical developments.

An estimate of the pattern of the industry in this country suggests that 10 per cent of the demand for watches is met by firms manufacturing completely here, another 15 per cent by firms importing movements for home-made cases, and the remainder is met by imported finished watches. On the other hand, the largest British case-producing firm exports cases to Switzerland, so that without detailed analysis it is not always possible to tell whether a watch appearing to be completely manufactured in Switzerland may not have had its case made in Birmingham, to a British design.

6: This *HELVETIA* Univertime watch shows how an unusual amount of information can be given legibly on a small surface with careful spacing and

clear lettering. In this photograph the face and back of the same watch are compared.



7: On this *TISSOT* Navigator local time is shown by the hands and the hour circle: time in other parts of the world is shown by the 24 hour inside disc which revolves.



LIGHT FITTING DESIGN PROBLEMS

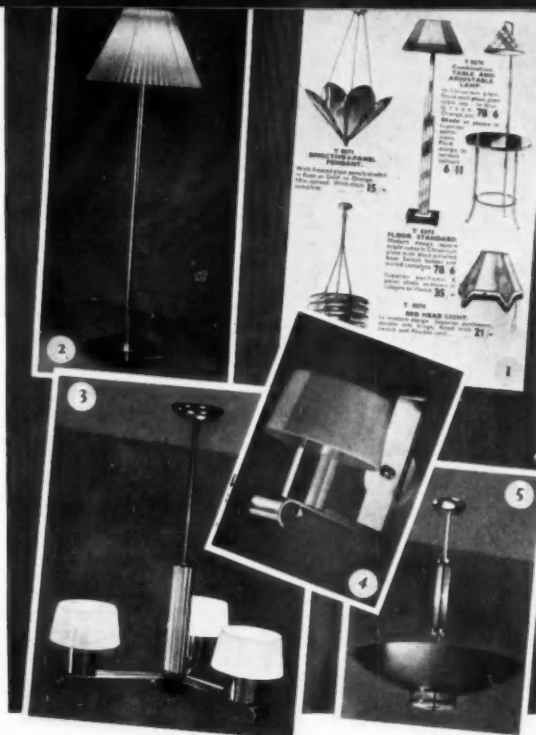
R. C. Hiscock

The problems encountered by a small firm of lighting fitting manufacturers in changing over half its production capacity to contemporary design are discussed in the following article. The author, Mr R. C. Hiscock, then goes on to describe some of the firm's recent designs and deals with the characteristic qualities of the materials used.

THE FIRM OF H. C. HISCOCK began making light fittings in 1931. As the managing director had previously spent some time in Sweden, he was able to bring a fresh approach to lighting at a time when fittings similar to those shown in a contemporary catalogue, 1, were regarded as the latest in modernity. The floor lamp, 2, for instance, with its pleated paper shade has remained basically unchanged since 1933. It was first made with the popular black and chrome finish but soon replaced by a polished anodised aluminium tube on a wax-polished veneered base.

Designs produced immediately after the war, 3, 4 and 5, did not reveal the contemporary approach so soon to follow, but nevertheless they were not so garish as many of their counterparts from other firms. The use of glassware, free from unsightly contours and gold lines, together with the clean lines of the metal-work, raised these designs well above the average standard. One or two cautious designs were shown at the British Industries Fair in 1951, but the response was disappointing. A much more serious effort made for the BIF in 1952 met with the most encouraging results, particularly on the domestic lighting side.

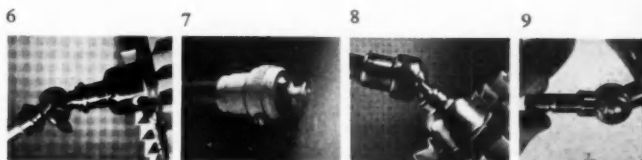
Already over half the firm's production capacity has been reorganised to meet this new demand. The problems involved have been considerable. Amongst them was the necessity of losing money by creating a stock



of obsolete components and patterns. For example, the parts shown in 6 and 7 are typical of standard 'parish goods' bought in bulk from component manufacturers. Their shapes are reminiscent of early gas plumbing and unsuited to contemporary designs. 6 is a knuckle-joint of Midland origin; 7 and 8 show a ball-joint before and after a modification which did not increase cost or use more material.

It would not be difficult to redesign many 'parish goods', but manufacturers must first be persuaded to provide new tools with no guarantee of a large demand to cover the initial cost. In this connection it is interesting to note the attitude to brass components expressed in an Italian design, 9. Here the knuckle-joint has been simplified by using a friction tensioning device which may be adjusted by the countersunk screw.

As the designer in a small firm is hampered to some extent by the cost of re-tooling, he is forced to conform with manufacturing traditions and use the stock patterns collected over many years. Fortunately, many of



the basic parts used by Hiscock's can be suited to contemporary designs. For instance, both **10** and **11** are based on the spun aluminium ball: a development from the glass ball used extensively before the war. The lush suburban table lamp which has a peach mirror glass base is no longer in production, but the same spun ball is used in the contemporary tripod design. Stock parts are used in many of the firm's new models and it has thus been possible to keep the outlay on new dies and tools to reasonable proportions.

Another problem which faces the designer concerns the materials best suited to lamp shades. The lamp shade, **12**, was first produced in 1950 and is made of expanded aluminium and CRINOTHENE, a waxy polythene plastic which will not pleat and cannot be formed under heat. While this is not a particularly interesting contemporary design, it is an example of what can be achieved when a designer is confined to a certain line of approach dictated by production capacity. No screws or stitches are needed to make this shade. In contrast is the shade in **13** which was made to please those in favour of sticks, slats and spills. This model embodies a contemporary cliché attributable to the 'wicker working group'. However, some attempt has been made to turn it into an actual shade for the lamp by introducing a plastic bell-shaped reflector inside so as to give some light-diffusing qualities.

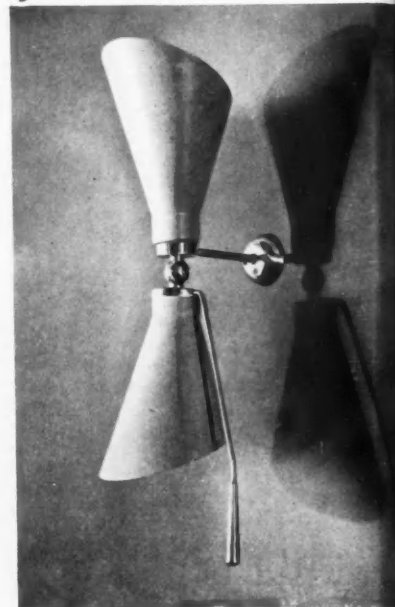
The use of the 'hot' metal reflectors as lamp shades has become an almost international practice amongst contemporary designers. The ingenious variety of shapes, notched, pierced, decapitated, strangled and tortured by all the wit and resources of the tool room have quite wrongly become symbolic of contemporary lighting, and are designed only for aesthetic effect. The 'old-fashioned' silvered-glass reflectors often give a more efficient light. The designer of the Italian double reflector, **14**, has had the sense to put an adjusting handle on the 'hot' reflector. Designers ought to remember that the average family spends most of its home life during eight months of the year in artificial light. It should not therefore be inflicted with the fetish for clinical austerity or have its homes bathed in a hard white light.

The chair-side lamp in **15**, nicknamed the 'hair dryer', also embodies this contemporary cliché. The shade of spun metal can be adjusted when cold. However, the 60 watt lamp, which only just fails to project from the end, throws a hard bright light on the person sitting beneath it. The telescopic bridge lamp, **16**, produced in 1936, has a narrow pleated shade in soft coloured acetate and is a better lighting unit for the home. The canopy pendant, **17**, although of the metal reflector category, provides a better light than most in this group. The three lamps direct their light onto a low 'ceiling' which diffuses the illumination over the area beneath it. This principle was originally used in oil-lamps.

Besides giving light of the right sort in the right place lamps can also bring colour into a room. The drum shade, **18**, and the shades on the trident fitting, **19**, use such colours as cherry-red, willow-green and sky-blue on



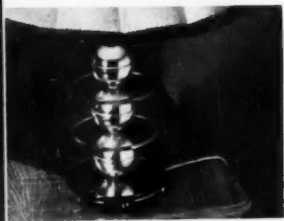
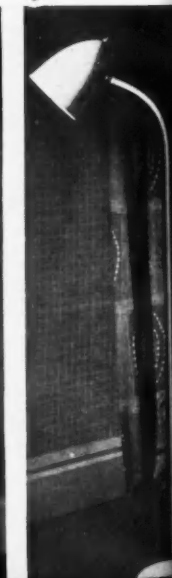
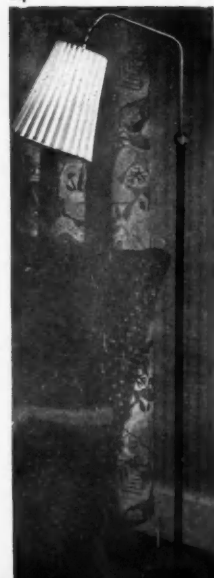
13



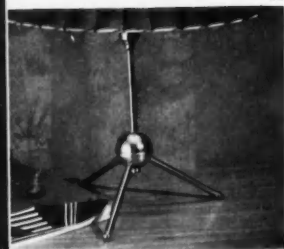
14

16

15



10



11

12



opaque stiff cards. On the trident model each shade is a different colour.

Apart from those already mentioned, a wide range of excellent lamp shade materials is now available. For instance, the open texture of buckram provides an attractive feathery appearance suitable to the slender supports to which the shade is often attached. It can be coloured and can be pleated in more than one plane as in 20 and 21. Buckram may however have an appearance too casual and unkempt for some designers. Alternatives are one or two cellulose acetate materials which pleat well and result in a crisper and more sharply tailored effect, 22. The colouring of these acetate materials requires some skill; the colours supplied by the makers are usually hard and cheap looking.

A new material which can also be pleated and formed under heat is a sheeting with a polyvinyl chloride base, but this is often spoilt by the makers who emboss it with a wrinkled skin effect. Perhaps the most outstanding advantage of this material is that it will pass the fire regulations of the LCC and Board of Trade for use in public halls.

Other forms of PVC sheet are used on a wire frame in the same way as silk and other fabrics, but so far no one has found an outstanding way of obtaining forms comparable with the 'cocoon' process of sprayed plastic. In addition, CRINOTHENE is available in a number of colours and has a mottled embossed surface. It is excellent as a light-diffusing material, but it cannot be used in a closed shade as it has a low melting point.

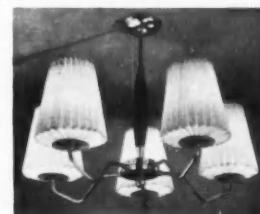
Other materials such as raffia and woven straw, though they are bad dust collectors, are being increasingly used where a 'folksy' atmosphere is required. Buckram, too, suffers from this fault, but the plastics are washable.

In this article I have dealt with a few of the many problems to be considered when designing light fittings. Yet the main problem, which concerns aesthetics, has only been implied in isolated instances. As this is no place to begin a philosophical discussion, I can only emphasise the need for bold experiments with materials and techniques in this relatively new field of industrial design. But, with this pressing need for *vitality* in all new work, designers should keep uppermost in their minds the varied yet equally important needs of the public which is to buy their creations.

Except numbers 1, 9 and 14, all the light fittings shown come from the range of H. C. Hiscock.



20



21



22



17



18 19



Design for



Groceries

A FAMILY LIKENESS is a desirable thing amongst such related products as canned fruit, pickle jars, cut peel packets, squash bottles, chocolate slabs, etc, and Kearley and Tonge Ltd (otherwise known as International Stores) have chosen their trade name and symbol – a

mitre – as the connecting link between their wide range of products.

There is no doubt that the present-day shopper is more aware of packaging design than her predecessors, and that where a choice is offered she will tend to purchase those products which are basically good and dressed up to suit her taste. But all shoppers are not necessarily discriminating in their choice of decoration, and it remains for the producing firm to devise packaging design which will appeal to all its clients.

Kearley and Tonge are convinced that display is a vital factor in the success of multiple store selling, and with this in mind they commissioned Design Research Unit to review, and in some cases re-design, the containers and labels for all the main lines of groceries and provisions manufactured and packed by them, and sold through some 1,500 branches of International Stores and subsidiary distributors.

A careful assessment was made by DRU of the present and potential market for their products, and on the basis of this a style of presentation was created that would not only be applicable to the range of manufactured and packed products, but also to shop counter display material.

When designing the new containers, the bulk



ABOVE: Heavy version of the re-drawn MITRE trade mark and name. This symbol is used throughout the packaging of all categories of Kearley & Tonge products.

LEFT: Chocolate wrapper in black and white incorporates the lighter version of the redesigned MITRE symbol, and uses an effective Bank Script for 'Plain Chocolate'. All the new labels, like those for lemon curd and honey, are varnished, to ensure cleanliness in handling.

packing of products for distribution by road or rail, from factory to retail branch, had to be considered as well as the printing or labelling of cartons for easy identification. It was desirable to establish the name and symbol of the firm – a mitre – on all products so that they could be easily recognised. A heavy and a light version of the mitre symbol were designed for use in different settings; the distinctively shaped cartouche carrying the word *Mitre* in script letters was to be used with the symbol in most cases. The letterforms chosen should be easily associated with the product, but a single standard letter is not always suited to every item. A sans-serif letter in both condensed and expanded forms was suggested for most displayed headings; a script or cursive letter for subheadings; and for the title, address of the company, and similar displayed text, the Plantin range.

The colour scheme is important, not only aesthetically, but also from the long-distance display angle, for identification while packing, storing and retailing, and for easy recognition by the shopper. As far as possible the colours used are complementary to the contents of the containers, where visible, and in other cases form a suitable background to the illustration or typographical treatment of the label or packet.

The new designs can be used for many years with only slight modifications, if required. Although every unit is easily identified as a MITRE product, the style and colour treatment vary according to each group, thereby emphasising the 'family resemblance' without becoming monotonous. Kearley and Tonge have produced a range of goods with an appearance that is highly acceptable to their old customers and more than likely to attract the interest of new ones as well.

PICKLE JAR LABELS: *In order to look pleasant against the varied colours of pickles such as white, yellow, dark brown, the colour chosen for the new label is blue. News Grotesque 9, Plantin Bold and Gill italics type faces are used to good effect on the label.*

SQUASH BOTTLES: *Both label and bottle for MITRE fruit squashes were completely redesigned, at the same time and by the same designer. The dark cartouche carrying the trade name fits the label shape neatly, which in turn is well placed on the bottle.*

BEFORE



AFTER



CUT PEEL PACKET: *The surface design for the cut peel packet has been considerably simplified and the information on the lid, although the same as before, owes much to careful layout. Gill letters have been used here.*



The MOTOR SHOW

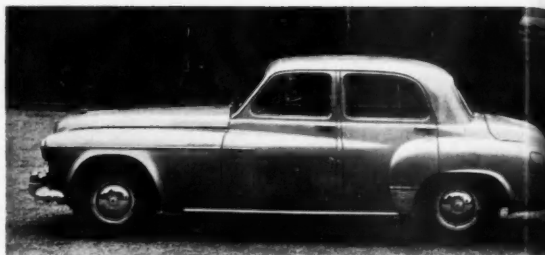
George Williams

THE VISITOR TO THIS year's Exhibition had not been led to expect surprises or an emergence of new styles in home produced cars, but at least he knew he could take more than a fleeting interest in the British models displayed.

In value for money, where mechanical performance, reliability and finish are concerned, British cars still have no equal. With these advantages we can, if the same realistic approach is made to the problem of appearance, maintain and possibly expand our export market. Now that there is less to choose between the performance of one car and another in the same class, sales will depend more and more on a high standard of appearance and comfort.

If yet another proof were wanted that 'good design pays', then the Show provided it. The firms with a sound design policy may still have difficulty in satisfying overseas as well as home demands, while the products of others were available 'off the shelf' well before the Show opened.

For all their lush comfort and good overall conception some American cars, in the matter of their unrelated surface gadgetry, are positively out of date. On the other hand the aesthetic standards of continental models are often outweighed by the disadvantages of limited comfort and seating capacity. This is a problem which has been overcome in even the cheapest and smallest of British cars, but without the same continuity of line.



HUMBER SUPER SNIPE: This design is derived from the earlier HAWK design; in fact the standard body shell appears to have been used from the front door shut to the rear quarter, but its increased overall length helps to improve the general balance in appearance. This is another proof that the British industry is able to produce a large and carefully thought out car at a price well below anything comparable made abroad. The detail of wheel discs, door handles and instrument layout is particularly good.

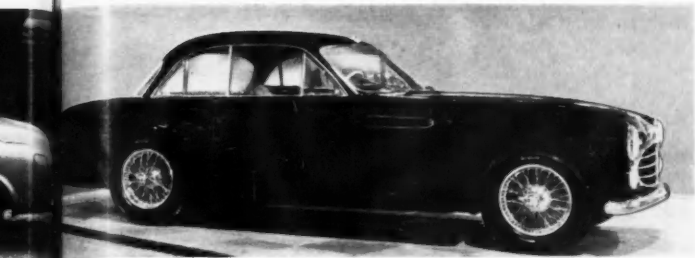


SIMCA: A newcomer to the range of French medium priced cars is the Simca 9 sports Type 53 fixed head two-door coupé. Its four cylinder engine develops a maximum speed of about 83 mph. The body line is pleasing but is obviously influenced by Italian and transatlantic trends. The American influence is particularly noticeable in the layout of the air intake. This type of car, but with two additional occasional seats, produced by a British manufacturer would be very popular abroad.



LAGONDA: The appearance of any mass-produced car is often 'out of date' by the time that it is available for sale, for the simple reason that tooling and production planning must be

spread over a number of years. It is therefore natural that special coachwork on British chassis should give rise to criticism of the standard product: a fact which indicates the need for forward thinking in the early design stages. By current standards the British Lagonda body (right), with its rather off-balance 'traditional' styling does less to emphasise the performance of this excellent chassis than do the fine proportions and clean frontal treatment of the Swiss Graber body (left) and those of another body by the British coachbuilder Tickford (not shown) which are worthy of detailed study.



DELAHAYE: By international standards the G.F.A. Delahaye 235 two-door saloon is aesthetically one of the better exhibits in the Show. It proves that even the French, renowned for adventurous styling, are realising that continuity, good proportions and well-planned cross-sectional contours are worth a ton of bad surface decoration. Nevertheless some of the detail is not carefully thought out.



TRIUMPH SPORTS CAR: The clean frontal appearance of this new 90 mph sports car, with its unusual treatment of the air intake aperture, is not carried through the whole design with the satisfactory results achieved in the Healey or Jaguar XK 120. These cars offer a less broken appearance in side elevation and have better luggage accommodation: an essential feature of this type of fast car which is used for long distance touring.



PEGASO: The Spanish Pegaso is the latest product of the new firm producing private and public transport vehicles in the old Hispano Suiza works, Barcelona, now under part State control. This high performance sports car with a two-door body has been achieved at high cost, but its well-balanced lines should be of interest to the designers of mass-produced cars.



HEALEY HUNDRED: British sports cars have always set a very high standard in performance and appearance which has rarely if ever been surpassed by other countries. The fact that we can mass-produce cars of the calibre of the HEALEY HUNDRED (now the Austin-Healey), the Jaguar XK 120, M.G. and Aston Martin (illustrated on the cover) - all very high performance cars, at home on the road or in international events - indicates that we have little to fear from foreign competition in this field.



ARMSTRONG SIDDELEY SAPPHIRE: The appearance of the post-war Armstrong Siddeleys was regarded by many to be a happy solution to the problem of introducing rational styling while still retaining the characteristics so long associated with this make. For this reason it is interesting to compare the earlier design retained in the WHITLEY saloon with the new SAPPHIRE, the company's latest product (left). It is a beautifully finished, high performance motor-car at a reasonable price, but its overall appearance does not offer anything new. It is obvious that the designers have followed a middle course in attempting to retain the so-called 'English Line' with applied wing shapes.

NASH AMBASSADOR: The new Nash Ambassador has been developed with the advice of the famous Italian coachbuilder, Pinin Farina, whose influence has resulted in an improvement on earlier models. Sectional contours and the treatment in side elevation are very good, but the makers have obviously been unwilling to depart too much from some of the American clichés, such as the large and ostentatious air intake and the heavy fenders (see DESIGN August 1952 page 9).

NEWS

German Council for Design

A new body set up

At a meeting in Bonn on October 13 the Rat für Formgebung (Council for Design) was set up for Western Germany.

The Rat für Formgebung had its immediate origin in the Darmstädter Gespräch: a three-day conference on design in Darmstadt which is described below.

The Council was officially formed by the Federal Minister for Economics, Professor Erhard, in the presence of members of the Deutscher Werkbund and representatives from the Government, industry, commerce, retail trade, the Press and the public. The Council will occupy premises in Darmstadt and for the first year it will receive from the Federal Government Dm. 70,000.

The aims of the new Council are, briefly, to foster co-operation between German manufacturers and industrial designers; to co-operate with other countries on design matters; to help those schools and academies wishing to raise design standards to obtain commissions from manufacturers; to assist in educating the general public in design appreciation, beginning with school-children.

The members of the Council represent the following groups: industry (7), Government (3), retail (5), Deutscher Werkbund, including industrial designers, craftsmen, journalists and the public (10).

The connection between the Rat für Formgebung and the Deutscher Werkbund was made explicit by the presence at the meeting of Federal President Heuss, who helped to create the Werkbund in 1907 and was its general secretary after the first world war.

The Darmstadt conference

The Darmstädter Gespräch, an international design conference, was held from September 20 to 22. At the same time there was a small exhibition, 'Mensch und Technik' (Men and Techniques) showing the wide ramifications of design in industry.

The conference was attended by Gordon Russell, Director CoID; Robert Gutmann, architect and industrial designer; Munro Runtz, Chairman of the Council of the Royal Society of Arts; Ashley Havinden, designer; H. A. Nieboer, lecturer in design, London Central School of Arts and Crafts; James Gardner, designer, (all from Great Britain); and by representatives from Western Germany, The United States, Switzerland, Holland, Argentina and France. The conference was witnessed by more than 1,100 people.

The theme for the first two days was 'Man and Engineering: the product, its design and application'. The discussion was mainly theoretical and did not recall the matter-of-fact tone of the first International Design Congress, held by the CoID in

London last year. At the end of the second day the speakers agreed that it was man, and not techniques, which really mattered, and that it was for man to decide what was to be the ultimate object of his technical achievements.

On the third day visitors from other countries exchanged their experiences. Mr Russell, who spoke with other members of the British delegation, described the increasing range of activities of the CoID.

To sum up the proceedings Professor Hans Schwippert, Chairman of the Deutscher Werkbund, told of the increasing difficulties encountered by the Werkbund after the war and of its decision to form a German Council for Design.

HEINRICH KÖNIG

[Some photographs of the exhibition 'Mensch und Technik' will be included in the next issue of DESIGN.]

'Window' pack for needles



Chief features of this new OSBORNE pack for the British Needle Co Ltd are the two 'windows' which enable one to see both the eye and the point at a glance. It is printed in blue and yellow and designed by A. R. Hundleby.

International Swedish Fair

The Swedish Industries Fair of Gothenburg which has worked for 35 years as a purely national Fair, has decided in future to invite other countries to exhibit their products. The first opportunity will be from September 12-20 1953.

The permanent premises of the Fair are in the centre of Gothenburg, which is Sweden's biggest port. Homes and buildings will be included within the scope of the exhibition.

All enquiries should be addressed to Svenska Mässan, Göteborg, S. Sweden.

Graphis samples service

A new and unusual venture for supplying regular parcels of printed matter samples, including posters and show cards, direct mail and packaging, has been started by Amstutz & Herdeg, publishers of the Swiss magazine, GRAPHIS.

The Graphis Samples Service, as it is called, costs £85 a year and subscribers receive ten parcels in 12 months.

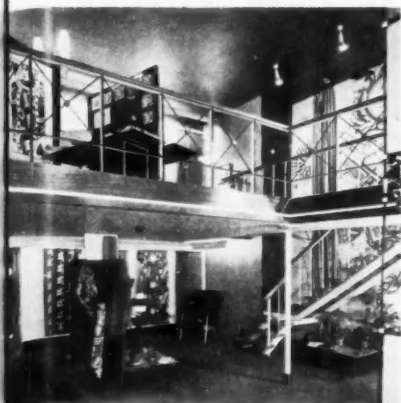
Further details may be obtained from Amstutz & Herdeg, Graphis Samples Service, 45 Nuschelerstrasse, Zurich 1, Switzerland.

New furniture and showrooms for Hille of London Ltd



Hille furniture is now distributed by a company called Hille of London Ltd with new showrooms in Albemarle Street, London. A view of one of its room settings is shown above; the reclining chair with steel frame and Latex foam upholstery was seen in prototype form at the 'Tomorrow's Furniture' exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. The desk, left, is the first in a new series of office furniture planned by Robin Day. The drawer-unit, with four ball castors, makes an independent unit.

New showroom for cotton



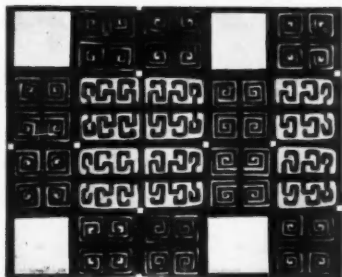
The Cotton Board Colour Design and Style Centre in Manchester has opened a showroom in which exhibitions of textiles may be changed with facility. The mezzanine, shown above, increases the floor space.

Carpet competition winners

Results of the carpet design competition organised by FURNISHING to encourage good contemporary design among students and experienced designers have been announced.

Entries, which had to be in contemporary style, were received in four classes: a Wilton square suitable for the living-room of a small modern house, a Wilton three-quarter width body carpet suitable for a large restaurant, a gripper Axminster square suitable for a medium-sized house and a spool Axminster rug suitable for a medium-sized house. First prize winners in these four classes respectively were Colin C. Royle, Zygmunt Turkiewicz, A. G. Millar and Colin C. Royle. First prize in a group aged 18 or under went to Betsy P. Armitage.

The judges were D. Cunningham Black, chief designer, Archibald Stevenson & Son Ltd; Robin Day, consultant designer; Leonard Griffin, director, Empire Carpet Co Ltd; Nigel Smallpage, director, Hunter & Smallpage Ltd, G. Baseden Butt and Michael P. Streat, assistant editors, FURNISHING. In their report on the competition the judges make it clear that they were not necessarily looking for designs that would enjoy a wide sale if offered on the market today. They were influenced by



Zygmunt Turkiewicz' design, above, for a WILTON three-quarter width body carpet suitable for a large restaurant won a first prize in FURNISHING's carpet competition; in black, cocoa-pink, light grey and gold.

evidence of fresh creative thinking, of new approaches to an old problem, rather than by mere competence in an accepted idiom or style. Entrants had been told that contemporary style design meant "a design which could only have been produced in our time and which owes its origin primarily to modern, rather than classical or traditional, thought".

Showhouse draws thousands

More than 5,000 visitors—five times the number expected—passed through the three-apartment showhouse in Glenrothes, Fife, which contained contemporary furniture arranged by Mrs Mary Tindall for the Scottish Committee, Council of Industrial Design. Parties of visitors overcame local transport difficulties by chartering special buses to bring them from all over Fife and from Edinburgh and Dundee.

Mrs Mary Tindall arranged the furnishing scheme, choosing from the stocks of Findlater Smith's of Edinburgh.

Exhibition of gold and silver

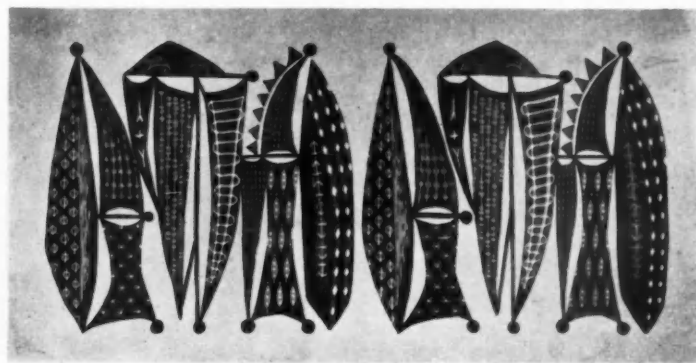
From January 8-31, Hamilton & Inches, the silversmiths of Edinburgh, are holding an exhibition of gold and silverware including presentation pieces for Coronation year in their George Street showrooms.

It is hoped to include special exhibits of notable historic pieces of gold and silver plate as well as new contemporary designs in silver and gold by Scottish designers and craftsmen.

80 posters were shown

Abram Games is a versatile designer of posters and publicity who has a first class idea almost every time and knows how to put that idea over. Anyone who doubts this should have seen the exhibition of his work held at the Ben Uri Art Gallery last month. Over 80 originals and reproductions were exhibited, most of them very familiar, some about to appear on the hoardings.

Mr Games is a self-taught craftsman and should be an inspiration to all young poster designers who see a long training ahead. Unfortunately few have the gift which results in these brilliant posters or the personality that persuaded the War Office to give him the task of reminding the army of their benefits and dangers, as well as publicity for recruiting.



First prize in the section for a Spool AXMINSTER rug for a medium sized house goes to Colin Royle. The main motif in this striking design is repeated twice on a fawn ground. Like most designs in this group it showed that "rug design may be regarded in somewhat the same light as a picture and may be considerably more decorative in style than would be acceptable in normal carpet work"—from the judges' report.

Lectures in Scotland

Third in the series of five lectures organised by the Scottish Committee, Council of Industrial Design, is to be given by George Breeze, director of Lewis's Ltd, on December 12 at 7 pm at The Royal Philosophical Society, Bath Street, Glasgow.

The last two in a series of Wednesday evening lectures at the Victoria and Albert Museum will be given by Sir Leigh Ashton, on 'The Centenary of the Victoria and Albert Museum' on December 10 and by Charles Gibbs-Smith on 'Victorian Costume' on December 17.

New hand-numbering machine

A hand-numbering machine with a patented inking mechanism which strikes the figures in a vertical plane has been designed and produced by E. W. H. Stanleigh & Co Ltd (N. Ireland). It ensures smooth, even inking, in contrast to the usual methods of rubbing or brushing. Five different actions



may be produced by turning a knob: consecutive, duplicate, triplicate, quadruplicate and repeat. The machine registers from one upwards, and with preceding noughts. When not wanted the noughts can be individually sunk.

The machine, called the STAN-WEAR ULSTER 95, is light and easy to handle, and the simple outer casing is a great improvement on the earlier model (right).

BOOKS

The Modern Shop, Bryan and Norman Westwood, *The Architectural Press*, 30s

Remembering the previous book on shops by the same authors in 1937 it is encouraging to see that some of the illustrations used then are still classics in this edition. The whole text is new and the title may mislead, for it is not only shops the authors deal with, but such things as 'Sitting and its Relation to Sales Value': a chapter in which some dozen subjects are dealt with.

The new idea of 'Self Service' shopping in appropriate trades is thoroughly dealt with and figures quoted to show how turnover has been greatly increased as a result of conversion to this type of planning. Costing and the organisation of shop design are covered in the last chapter. At a time when there are more goods to sell and the market keener than for some time this book comes as a great help and stimulant to those thinking of new shops. The enterprising shopkeeper will want to have a copy, not only for the photographs of new shops, but because of the horse sense of its principles.

As with all Architectural Press publications it is well designed in itself and nicely printed. The authors might have spared us the one or two foreign Baroque 'Cream Puffs'; these might so easily be copied or worse still enlarged upon. In their stead could have been some examples of flexible showrooms, showing different types of easily arranged screens, etc. Dates alongside the previous book's illustrations would have been of interest, too, if only to show that good design does last, and pay!

GEOFFREY DUNN

Art and Everyman, Volume II. Margaret H. Bulley. Batsford, £2 5s (Two volumes £4 4s)

This is the second volume of Miss Bulley's huge, sincere, elaborate, vastly well-meaning, and sometimes irritating work. It deals mainly with painting and sculpture—Volume I dealt with the house and its

furnishings (DESIGN May 1952 page 34). Once again is assembled an astounding collection of illustrations ranging from great works of art in uncommon variety to photographs of an amoeba, electrons and an equation by Einstein. These are intended to support a suggested science of art, which, systematically applied, will divide works of art from 'not art' with the automatic accuracy of a photo-electric meter. Instead of the mass tests of the first volume, here the tests are few, and John and Mary and their companions take part in them. Their comments are naive, and are naively interpreted by the author. In one case, an uncharacteristic Picasso is used to denigrate Giorgione's 'Tempest', this painting being found to be 'pie in the sky', the author confirming the verdict regally by 'We agree'. By applying the 'science of art' the group of neophytes also confirms the fraudulence of Van Meegeren on even vaguer grounds.

The bulk of the book, however, is given to detailed analysis and comment on the many hundreds of illustrations and the beginner is certain to gain from this, in that a fixing of attention on the works of art is bound to result. All this leads ultimately to a theory of truth or goodness in art expressed in terms which seem to grow ever more mystical. There is no doubt that the graphic part of the book is stimulating and enjoyable, but if any beginner proposes to work conscientiously through the two volumes, he should be emphatically warned that the teaching is very personal to Miss Bulley and does not necessarily belong to widely accepted opinion.

H. S. WILLIAMSON

Modern Furnishings for the Home, edited by William J. Hennessey, Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 80s (British distributors, Chapman and Hall)

Since this is essentially a picture-book of current furnishings in the United States, one turns first to the pictures, hoping to discover the trends typical of that country today. Unfortunately the 480 photographs reveal no perceptible trend unless it is the adoption of every current European style simultaneously, not excepting experimental

prototypes which should have died at birth. One would expect the vastness of the United States, its wide range of climates and the varied origin of its population to be against the development of a homogeneous style comparable with the 'Colonial' furniture of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless too many of the illustrations, if they are to be taken as representative, are rather shocking in their Mayfairish 'smartness' and naïveté. Each piece, we are told, "exemplifies the basic concept of all good contemporary design—undisguised form influenced by function, together with intelligent use of materials and fine craftsmanship. All are real, no dream promises of the future; all answer the unique demands of our times in terms of advanced technology and know-how!" All the clichés about function and craftsmanship are here, but the furniture itself suggests that the *ideas* have never penetrated.

One can often mark the same divorce between promise and performance in this country, and if the examples in this book strike one as more extravagant, it is probably because American wealth permits and encourages them to be so. In many designs one can detect the craving to evolve a striking new pattern out of a new material with no thought to its usefulness. Light fittings and cocktail tables seem to be singularly subject to this failing. There are also some interesting variations of forms proved here and on the Continent, though there are few pieces of really fine craftsmanship. A section at the end of the book is devoted to textiles, almost all prints. The patterns follow closely the trends to which our younger designers have accustomed us.

NOEL CARRINGTON

EM, Edward Mortimer Ltd

The first issue of this magazine for print buyers is an ambitious and, we hope, a worthwhile adventure for a printer to undertake.

Here is a very sound way of showing by example and by editorial comment how well a printer can lay out, set and print copy. In this issue a feature 'Print and the Coronation' sets out most clearly how a

Contemporary furniture in Bournemouth and London



One of the newest recruits in the field of contemporary design, J. J. Allen Ltd of Bournemouth, introduced new ideas to its customers by holding an exhibition of furniture and furnishings. A layout similar to that used for the CoID's touring exhibition (DESIGN June 1952 page 10) was used.



Liberty's are needing more space for displaying contemporary furniture. This view is of part of a new showroom on the third floor where contemporary and antique furniture are mingled.

manufacturer can use the Royal Arms and other emblems of heraldry on printed matter of all kinds – with examples. Other features deal with the annual problem of the trade calendar, printed labels and how to avoid trouble with the G.P.O.

Lettering Art in Modern Use, Raymond A. Ballinger, The Reinhold Publishing Corporation (U.K. Chapman & Hall), 96s.

The author has cast a very wide net, mainly over North America, to include lettering applied to everything from stained glass to toys, and having found his examples he has had the services of first-class photographers, block makers and printers to assist him in making his 'collectors pieces' scintillate on the page; that is his great skill. The make-up of the book is as well considered and designed as so many of the letter forms illustrated.

P.H.

LETTERS

From lightfittings to ceramics

Mr A. B. Read was recently appointed Director of Design of the Carter Group of Companies, after 24 years of service with Troughton & Young Ltd in a similar position. We asked Mr Cyril Carter to comment on Mr Read's appointment and the following is his reply.

What Mr Read has done for Troughton & Young in the last 24 years is well known. The jump from electrical fittings and electric lighting to tiles and pottery may seem to be a longish one, both from his point of view and ours. In that regard we may possibly have been influenced by the opinions expressed by those who addressed the International Design Congress in 1951.

It is not a chief designer that this group of companies has appointed, but a Director of Design – a very definite distinction. This is a much bigger matter than the production of designs, patterns, shapes and so on – it is a question of direction, of influence. Steuben Glass, for instance, employs an architect as Director of Design.

There is another and perhaps somewhat personal attitude to this question which will unfortunately be appreciated by less and less of your readers. A. B. Read, as I think of him, is a bridge – a bridge between my generation and whatever may follow. I feel that I come somewhere between what I think of as the present generation and that of men like Charles Holden, Frank Pick, Ambrose Heal, Harold Stabler, Lutyens, Lethaby – in whose faith I grew up in the 'twenties and 'thirties. A. B. Read is of their tradition, he has their outlook. I believe that outlook to have been right; it was a progressive outlook with a great regard for quality of design and material. Stabler's influence, though he was, officially, only associated with the Poole Pottery Company, was felt throughout the whole business and extended far beyond pots and such decorative modelled faience as he was responsible for.

I cannot always follow the present younger generation in their exuberances though I cannot argue with them as to whether they are right or wrong, and I find much of their work stimulating and even exciting. This is what I mean by saying that I look on A. B. Read as a bridge – a bridge between the generation whom I regard as having done so much and that of which we know so little.

C. C. CARTER
Carter & Co Ltd
Poole, Dorset

A Danish 'classic'

SIR: Will you please allow me to comment on the chair which is one of the illustrations to the article 'The changing face of Modern Design and what it may mean commercially' by Paul Reilly (DESIGN August page 16). It is Danish and manufactured by Fritz Hansens Eftfl. During a recent visit to Denmark I learned that this particular chair is the outcome of both long and costly



experimenting. I was told that Fritz Hansens Eftfl spent something like 100,000 D. Kronor (about £5,000) before this chair went into production. Since then it has become a best-seller not only in Denmark, but apparently it is being exported in fairly large numbers to the United States, Great Britain and other countries. The article to which I refer does not mention that the chair can be taken to pieces and packed in a fairly small box. The chair shows an extremely enterprising spirit from a country with roughly half the population of London.

ROBERT WALLER
24 Middlesex Road
Aylestone, Leicester

MR REILLY COMMENTS:

This chair by Fritz Hansens Eftfl is now, or will become, a 'classic' in the modern movement; it is as distinguished in its day as were the pioneer chairs of Le Corbusier or Marcel Breuer before the war.

AGBI needs support

SIR: I am writing to seek the support of readers of DESIGN in what I know to be a good cause – The Artists' General Benevolent Institution.

The free-lance artist or designer is, as all creative men must be, an individualist. He has no trade union behind him; he gets no unemployment benefit if he misses the market; no pension from years of service. The State does not help him unless he is ill. Only the AGBI stands between him and disaster if anything goes wrong.

The AGBI has carried on its good work since 1814; its funds are well administered, largely by voluntary workers, and its expense ratio is very small; every penny is well used to benefit someone in need. There are many who, through no fault of their own, must seek its help, and the cost

of keeping alive is higher than ever before. May I ask your readers to help to make this coming Coronation year a great one in the Institution's annals by enlarging the funds at its disposal, and send their contributions to the writer for the Artists' General Benevolent Institution.

MILNER GRAY
The Society of Industrial Artists
Steward for the AGBI, May 1952–3
Design Research Unit
37 Park Street, London, W1

Designers in this issue

PAGE 6: Derek Cook; Dr D. Lever; Joy and Eric Parkin. PAGE 8: Russel Wright (also page 9); Eva Zeisel (also page 9). PAGE 10: E. W. Slater (also pages 11 and 15); Susie Cooper, RDI (also pages 14 and 15); Truda Carter, ARCA; Charlotte Rhead. PAGE 11: Raymond Ratcliffe; C. J. Noke; H. Holdway; Eric Ravilious. PAGE 13: J. Wadsworth. PAGE 14: E. Sambrook, Jr; Victor Skellern, ARCA, FSIA. PAGE 15: A. Sayer Smith. PAGE 19: Douglas Scott, MSIA; R. M. Kay, BSC. PAGE 20: John Waterer, FSIA; Ronald Long; Ronald Avery, MSIA. PAGE 21: Mrs K. Henneberg; J. A. Charles; Robin Day, ARCA, FSIA; W. H. Russell, FSIA; Herbert Berry, MSIA; H. Allender; J. J. Allender, Jr. PAGE 28: Milner Gray, RDI, FSIA; Ronald Ingles, MSIA; Kenneth Lamble, LSIA. PAGE 32: Gordon Russell, CBE, MC, RDI, FSIA; Robert Gutmann, FSIA; Ashley Havinden, RDI, FSIA; H. A. Nieboer, MSIA, AMIME; James Gardner, OBE, RDI, FSIA; A. R. Hundleby, MSIA. PAGE 33: Abram Games, FSIA.

Acknowledgments

PAGE 6: Miniature clockwork cars by courtesy of the Army and Navy Stores Ltd. PAGES 8–9: We are indebted to Mr Lucien Myers, managing director of Carter, Stabler & Adams Ltd, for making the American pottery available for reproduction in DESIGN. PAGES 22–24: Photographs by courtesy of the Editor, WATCHMAKER, JEWELLER and SILVERSMITH. PAGE 31: Photograph of HEALEY car by courtesy of AUTOSPORT.

The article on experiments with rubber upholstery announced in last month's issue will be published in DESIGN, January 1953. The exhibition of Latex foam furniture also announced last month has been postponed until next spring.

The FERRANTI radio cabinets illustrated in the October issue of DESIGN were designed by Edward Dunstall.

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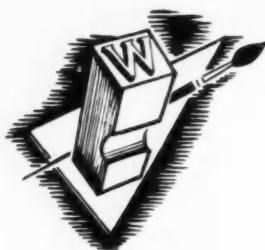
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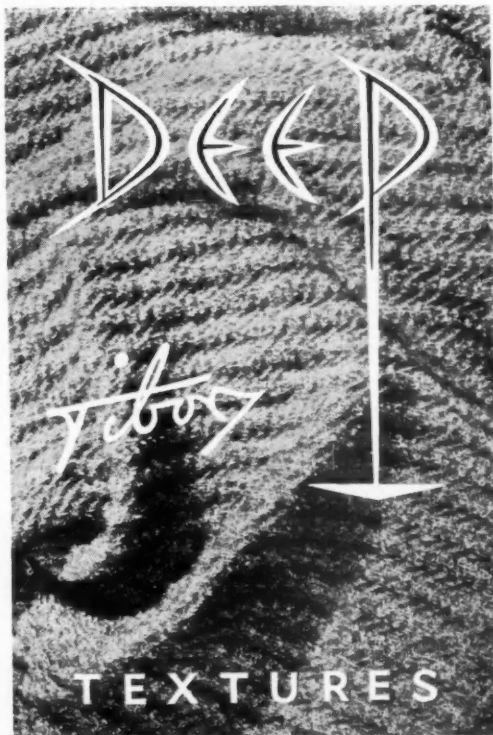
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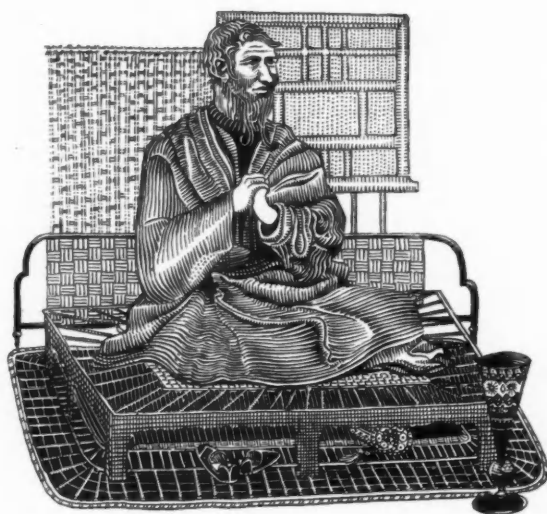
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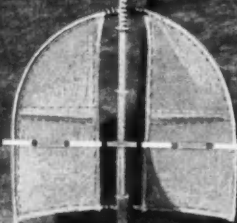
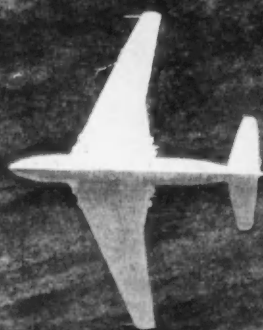
of precious metals, and it is used in laundries, and for domestic water softening. Both borax and boracic acid are well known in medicine, and other boron compounds are employed as glazes for ceramics, in the manufacture of heat-resisting glass and in agriculture.

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